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Vallot

JOHN J. BERGER
CARTER AND THE PLUTONIUM ECONOMY

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FISSION ON THE RIGHT
RICHARD VIGUERIE'S BID FOR POWER
Alan Crawford

Varieties of American Literary Experience

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EDITORIALS

The CIA Gauntlet

The best choice to head the CIA would have been (and still is) some thoroughly obscure intelligence analyst, learned and expert at his craft, a person whose name no one can remember. His performance would be judged on the basis of how well he maintained his obscurity and on the extent and accuracy of the information he gathered on the world beyond our shores.

The most distressing aspect of the Sorensen episode is the way in which it highlighted the institutionalization of intelligence in this country's "security" system. The CIA's director must be a "star," a man who represents, in a symbolic way, the might and the right (and, of course, the Right) of this nation. He must be seen to stand for all those dark arts of manipulation and hidden violence which will keep the forces of evil off balance and our great ideological adversary at bay. The notion is that if you "know your enemy" well enough and enlist enough friendly dictatorships on "our side," you can avoid the ultimate test of nuclear war with the Soviet Union.

It is all utter nonsense, pure fantasy, of a political seriousness equivalent to the duty of the augurs who read the entrails of birds for signs of the prudent course for Rome. The link between these phenomena, twenty centuries apart, is that the people must be made to believe in these solemn rites conducted by their guardians. And so the message from the Senate of the United States is that this body has once again protected our freedom by forcing the withdrawal of the nomination of Theodore Sorensen as head of the CIA.

The character, background and competence of Theodore Sorensen do not count for much in this charade. The Senate, through the Select Committee on Intelligence, was determined to reject a nominee whose credentials as a cold warrior were not impeccable (he had registered for the draft as willing to serve only in noncombatant service, and he had made available to the Daniel Ellsberg defense in the Pentagon Papers case his own experience with the use of classified government papers).

Sorensen says that much of the opposition to him was organized by right-wing groups like the American Conservative Union, the Liberty Lobby and the John Birch Society and there is reason to believe him. But Sorensen is no flaming liberal and the effective opposition to him came from a less kooky and much more influential area than these right-wing extremist outfits represent. It came from what might be called the "failure-of-nerve" section of the American Establishment, those who propagandize for U.S. intervention against any kind of socialism all over the world and who favored, for example, direct action by our forces in the Angolan civil war.

There is a kind of grim comedy in this Senate action. Congress has notoriously "gone along" with both the FBI and the CIA, never questioning their illegal and unconstitutional behavior until it was clear that the whole apparatus was completely out of control. Only then, after Watergate, did it hold hearings and start passing laws to bring these agencies back toward, if not into, line. And with that miserable record of playing dead before the intelligence agencies, these elected representatives of ours now dare to stand up and, in effect, dictate to the new President the leadership of the "intelligence community."

Carter clearly had no intention of radically reforming the intelligence setup; he showed that by appointing the quite conventional Sorensen. The rebuff is therefore the more remarkable. Not since 1925 has a Cabinet-level appointment been rejected by a Congress controlled by the President's own party. The Congressional gauntlet was flung at his feet even before he took office. We would recommend to him, without much hope that he will agree, that he pick up the challenge and prepare for battle with the ultras of the Congressional foreign policy world. In this area, at least, he can look forward to no honeymoon with Congress, however brief; only to a long and contentious marriage.

The relationship will not be made more tolerable by yielding to the bullies on the Hill; they will be glaring at him over the breakfast table for years to come. The best thing he could do would be to fight for a total restructuring of the intelligence system, starting with the elimination of the CIA and the redistribution of its functions to more controllable agencies of government. That would take time, naturally, and it would require the enlistment of popular support against the well-known excesses of the spy community.

The CIA has been hopelessly compromised by its own record, and it cannot be reformed. Carter could start by naming some faceless and unassailable functionary from that world as an acting director of intelligence and then start his campaign to get control, once and for all, of the whole sprawling, runaway bureaucracy of intelligence "operations." That would require new laws and on this issue he might as well tackle Congress head-on.

French Recipe for Cowardice

Take a soupçon of grandeur, blend it with a cupful of calculation, cook over a hot oil flame and you have the modern French recipe for cowardice. It might be called deviled Abu Daoud à la Giscard.

The French Government is up in arms (not the kind it sells to the Arabs) over the loud international protest at the hasty release of the Palestinian terrorist who walked boldly into its toils and was quickly whisked out of them as a hot potato, to take the heat off those sensitive French hands. France, says President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, resents the "campaign of insult and vilification against [its] honor and dignity"; its policies "will not be made in international newsrooms," and the country of Louis XIV and de Gaulle "has no lessons to take from anyone."

This tone hardly reinforces the grandeur Giscard borrows from the past. It is fake de Gaulle, minus the earned magisterial trimmings. Pettiness and injured pride are the dominant notes in this Presidential plaint. Unfortunately for Giscard and for France, the facts of this strange case of the sprung terrorist do not support the aggrieved tone.

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The motives behind the facts may be obscure, buried in the nasty world of Arab terrorism and international intrigue over arms and oil. But it is perfectly clear that France acted with indecent haste in letting Abu Daoud go before he could be extradited for trial in Germany for his part in the 1972 Munich Olympic Games massacre of the Israeli athletes. Legal technicalities abound to justify the French court's decision to free this PLO operative, but similar technicalities would have justified the opposite course. As *Le Monde* commented, one must conclude that those courts take their orders from the government for reasons of state and that the police who arrested Abu Daoud (to the embarrassment of the French Government) do not.

The reasons of state include France's nearly total dependence on Arab oil and a deal to set up a factory in Egypt where a billion dollars worth of the latest and hottest in Mirage fighter planes would be made for the enemies of Israel. Giscard also had a personal problem about a visit he plans to make to Saudi Arabia late this month. The French elites cannot rid themselves of the notion that they have a special, almost romantic, relationship with the Arab world, one that gives them the right or duty to "make peace" in the Middle East. They would accomplish this feat while selling the Arabs arms at an increasing clip, a straddle they must admit they learned from the America of Henry Kissinger.

The U.S. Government, arms supplier to both sides in the Middle East and tangled in all sorts of intrigues there, is not in the best moral position from which to lecture the French on their shocking behavior in the Abu Daoud case. But civilized people everywhere have a right to at least a sneer at the pretensions to the civilizing mission which the French have always claimed for themselves, even when they pursue a policy of cowardly calculation.

First Amendment Hustle

A magazine called *Hustler*, we can tell readers who are not connoisseurs of such stuff, is among the trashiest of girlie magazines. It is also among the fastest growing, and probably for both reasons it is now the focus of a dangerous attack on First Amendment rights.

Hustler's approach to sex is weirdly mechanical: huge close-ups of how the human machine is constructed, and full-page ads for attachments that promise to make its operations produce more of that ultimate commodity, pleasure. Its owner, Larry Flynt, also prides himself on his magazine's "tastelessness," which apparently means cartoons and copy that lightheartedly link sex and violence. It was one of those drawings, in fact—with an added political fillip—that was the immediate cause of *Hustler*'s troubles. In the July 1976 issue appeared a cartoon of President Ford, Henry Kissinger and Nelson Rockefeller raping the Statue of Liberty. Not long afterward, Flynt and his associates were charged in Cleveland and Cincinnati with conspiracy to violate pornography laws, a crime punishable in Ohio by twenty-five years in prison. The Cleveland prosecutor says that the cartoon had spurred him to action.

The action was based on an Ohio law passed with

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clearly repressive purpose after the Kent State tragedy. Under the law, any five people who gather with the intent of breaking another law are guilty of conspiracy. Conspiracy statutes, of course, have a long and ignoble history in this country, but the Ohio variety is one of the most pernicious. It is bad enough that Flynt and his cohorts face twenty-five years for conspiring to flout a pornography law that itself only provides a penalty of six months. But that conspiracy statutes should be stretched in order to stifle a free press is deeply disturbing.

Ohio's attempt to hustle *Hustler* off the stands, and its owner to jail, is a natural outgrowth of the Supreme Court's benighted decision to leave the definition of illegal pornography up to "community standards." That decision insured the survival of America's breed of fanatically puritan—and often politically ambitious—district attorneys, and has predictably resulted in a wave of indictments against alleged pornographers. But the Ohio cases go further than simply imposing the standards of one group in the "community" on another, objectionable though that may be. By threatening Flynt with Draconian penalties, the Cleveland and Cincinnati prosecutors are obviously trying to drive him out of business altogether, or to frighten him into altering *Hustler*'s style—which amounts to imposing the standards of Ohio on the rest of the country. And what Ohio can do, other states with similar statutes can repeat.

The impact of a possible Flynt conviction in either Ohio jurisdiction is suggested by a remark the Cleveland prosecutor, Bruce Taylor, made on television. He said that if he could get Flynt, he would then move against *Playboy*, so that Cleveland could have the distinction of being the first city in the United States where *Playboy* was illegal. Flynt himself replied in a full-dress New York press conference, saying that "If they can shut down *Playboy*, how long will it be before they move against *Time* and *Newsweek*?" Odd though such truths may sound coming from a man who publishes what can only be called a vile magazine, he was uttering sound constitutional doctrine when he said them.

EDEN: A MEMOIR

Herbert Mitgang

In the last decade of his life, the First Earl of Avon showed flashes of the brilliance as a diplomat and wise statesman that the world recognized during his great years when he was known simply as Anthony Eden. There is a mistaken impression that he faded away after the Suez Canal fiasco and his resignation as Prime Minister. Yet in memoirs, talks, public writings and private conversations he continued to stand for alliances of free nations, negotiated peace and détente, and human rights.

He deplored the bellicose and lingering policies of his nemesis, John Foster Dulles, and he did not particularly admire the personal and publicity style of Henry A. Kissinger. While careful not to criticize his old American ally openly, he saw the folly of Vietnam where the B-52s substituted bombs for diplomacy. Had his ideas for a negotiated peace been followed, hundreds of thousands of casualties on all sides might have been avoided.

"If I were in Washington now and sincerely wanted a settlement which was neither victory nor a surrender," he suggested in a handwritten letter to me in 1967, "I would first determine in detail what I could accept. If a plan like 'Towards Peace' won't do, I would then determine what is required. Having done that, the essential homework, I would without publicity suggest to the governments of the two co-chairmen [Anthony Eden and V. M. Molotov were in 1954 joint chairmen of the Geneva Conference on Far Eastern Affairs that created a temporary peace] that they should each nominate a trusted diplomat and that the pair should be charged with approaching the interested parties, again without publicity, with the purpose of trying to establish a set of conditions that were tolerable to all of them.

"This would involve travel and infinite patience and would take time, but at least we might that way at length arrive. By present methods I doubt if we ever shall and where shall we all be then? You will probably have noticed that the method I propose is the same, *mutatis mutandis*, as we adopted over the Trieste business twelve years ago. It took eight months then. . . ."

The "Towards Peace" referred to a volume he had written called *Towards Peace in Indochina* (Houghton Mifflin, 1966) in which he had concluded that the Geneva Agreements could serve as the framework for the cease-fire negotiations and for the terms of any guaranteed settlement; that the Geneva Conference membership—the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, France, Laos, Cambodia, North and South Vietnam—should be retained; that the USSR and the United Kingdom should continue to function as co-chairmen; that any agreement should guarantee the territories and neutrality of Laos and Cambodia, offering the same opportunity to South and North Vietnam; that the Geneva Prisoner of War Convention should be strictly observed; that military plans and movements should be dovetailed into the political program laid down by the conference, whose first duty should be to give instructions for determining a cease-fire.

In a private talk at his home in Alvediston, shortly after his book came out, Eden told me what he could not say publicly without seeming to intervene in American affairs—that he would happily lend his counsel to any undertaking that would help to restore peace in Indochina. His writings and speeches sought an invitation to play the part of peacemaker; he was too modest to say that, having done it once as a co-chairman, he could do it again. The invitation never came. The blast of war blew too strongly in Washington's ears: the hawks had stif-

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fened their sinews, summoned up the blood.

He particularly saw through the military and moral damage of conducting a war policy through bombsights. He compared the bombing of North Vietnam to the bombing of Britain by the Germans in 1940, saying that it created in the inhabitants an illusion of being David against Goliath. "It is certain that the air attacks are regarded by the North Vietnamese with hatred," he pointed out, "not merely on account of the casualties but also because, where in the Far East the margin of subsistence is already narrow, destruction which narrows it further is considered the harshest cruelty."

Even ten years after leaving office, Eden was not stuck in the shibboleths of the past. He did not fall for the argument that ending the war in Vietnam without victory somehow smacked of appeasement. As the symbol with Churchill in the 1930s of anti-appeasement, he said in 1966: "To work for a guaranteed international treaty settlement for Vietnam doesn't seem to me to be appeasement. Neutrality is not a crime; it is a risk."

He was still active in Conservative Party affairs and as a senior statesman in the House of Lords during the last few years of declining health. He sent me a copy of Hansard's Parliamentary Debates for March 14, 1974, when he arose to deliver a *tour d'horizon* of the state of the world.

In that speech to his fellow Lords, he approved the action of President Nixon in sending "his Mercury, Dr. Kissinger," to Peking, but added that he had two regrets —first, that the contact had not been made twenty years before, which might have reduced suffering and death; second, that the Japanese were not informed in advance about the American move, especially since Japan was a growing industrial power also interested in peace. He took a swipe at President Eisenhower's "Secretary of State" (without uttering his name) for slamming shut the door to disarmament talks with the USSR which Eden had proposed in 1955. As always, he stressed the importance of NATO as a military and political necessity, and hoped for continued American participation in Europe's affairs. Eden found one of the most disturbing aspects in the world the increasing impoverishment of the poorer nations. And he concluded: "Toleration and cooperation is what the world needs if it is to survive; and it is what we need at home, too."

Early last year, Lord Avon called me from Florida, where he was staying with Averell Harriman. It was to be our last talk. He asked what was new in the Presidential election campaign and in the United States; of course, he knew more than his respondent. He repeated that "NATO is our thing, but we still have to try to get an agreement to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons, not just to prevent disaster but as a matter of economy for the world bent on peace."

He ended up by saying that he was pleased to be here during the Bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence because he had some American links. A relative had married Lord Baltimore's sister and, in Maryland, an ancestor of his had been sympathetic to the Revolutionary side.

When it counted, Eden had stood up to the dictators and later had foreseen the anti-democratic tendencies and terrorism emanating from the Arab world. He had not betrayed his times; the times had abandoned him. "Man's greatest achievement is neither commercial nor scientific, nor even artistic," he once said. "It is the practice of self-government by a free people." □

Carter & the Plutonium Economy

JOHN J. BERGER

President Carter's avowed nuclear policy is a distinct improvement over the Nixon-Ford administration's fidelity to the cause of nuclear power promotion and President Ford's assiduous neglect of the renewable sources of energy. In contrast to Ford's crisis-oriented energy policy, and his lavish subsidy programs for the ailing nuclear industry, the Carter staff has set the foundation for perhaps the most comprehensive reconstruction of U.S. energy policy in the postwar era.

But despite his major advances toward a coherent energy policy, a number of basic issues still abruptly separate Carter from current thinking on nuclear power by energy analysts most sensitive to the dangers of relying on such expensive and centralized "high technology."

The principal guideposts of Carter's emergent nuclear policy are his acknowledgment that the United States has spent a disproportionate amount of money on nuclear power, and his commitment to use it in future as little as possible. He proposes to redress the spending balance in favor of renewable sources, such as solar energy. Yet he also believes that nuclear power can be made acceptably safe. Thus, buried not too far beneath the surface of Carter's nuclear position are two scarcely consistent tenets: nuclear power can be controlled, i.e., made safe, but it should be used as little as possible. If in fact it can be safe, then, barring environmental and economic concerns, why use it so little? If it is so dangerous that it should be used only as a last resort, then why use it at all? Carter's answer is apparently that some reliance on nuclear power is unavoidable, a position that places him in direct conflict with nuclear opponents.

In his first debate with Ford, on September 24, 1976, he said, "I would certainly not cut out atomic power altogether. We can't afford to give up that opportunity until later." Actually, the sooner we wean ourselves from uranium fission in the United States, the cheaper the move

John Berger is the author of Nuclear Power: The Unviable Option, A Critical Look At Our Energy Alternatives *(Palo Alto: Ramparts Press). He is also energy projects director for Friends of the Earth.*

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will be (in dollars as well as in radioactive contaminants released to the environment), and the easier it will be to begin converting the economy to renewable energy technologies.

To his credit, Carter declared himself determined to use nuclear energy "with the strictest precautions" at the plant site. Yet he said little about the environmental dangers of operating the whole nuclear industry from mine to waste dump, and directed his remarks almost entirely to reactor safety and the hazards of international proliferation. The tenor of his statements on these subjects has reinforced the notion that safe nuclear power is possible, and he has given the public no reason to doubt that, with the reactor safety measures he proposes, nuclear power can be an acceptable generating technology in the United States. A technological optimist, Carter seems to believe that, despite our expensive and frustrating experience with nuclear power over the past thirty years, we are at last on the verge of making it adequately safe.

Carter has committed himself to supporting the following reactor safety measures: placement of reactor cores below ground level; "tightly sealed" containment buildings kept below atmospheric pressure so as to prevent airborne radioactivity from escaping; "standardized plant design," and the constant presence in all power plant control rooms of an independent nuclear specialist (not a utility employee) with authority to shut down the plant should abnormal conditions develop.

The reactor cores of most U.S. reactors are already built partially below ground, and reactor containment buildings are routinely sealed and kept at less than atmospheric pressure. Carter did not call for the more expensive procedure of placing the whole reactor containment building below ground, nor for the burial of the entire nuclear power plant, which could boost construction costs by a full 50 per cent (according to a forthcoming study for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission by Sandia Laboratories).

Concerning protection of the public after a nuclear accident, Carter has endorsed the need for adequate evacuation plans and has opposed the renewal of the Price-Anderson Act. He has not stated his objection, but presumably it is because the Act limits to $560 million the total liability that must be paid in the event of a major nuclear accident, even should damage range into the billions, as government studies have said it might.

Although he faced the reactor safety and insurance issues, Carter glossed over the handling of toxic, long-lived and "high-level" reactor wastes with little more than an acknowledgment that dangers were involved. In his speech to the U.N. on May 13, 1976, Carter said, "Radioactive wastes may be a menace to future generations and civilizations, unless they are effectively isolated within the biosphere forever." But as to specific recommendations for holding harmless the large quantities of indestructible carcinogens, Carter merely expressed an impatience to get the problem solved:

"We need to cut through the indecision and debate about the long-term storage of radioactive wastes and start doing something about it. The United States could begin by preparing all high-level radioactive wastes currently produced from our military programs for permanent disposal. Waste disposal is a matter on which sound international arrangement will clearly be necessary."

In presenting this alleged "solution" to the U.N. audience, Carter referred only to military wastes being "currently produced"; he overlooked nuclear wastes from commercial reactors and did not even allude to the failure of the AEC and the Energy Research and Development Administration to devise satisfactory ways of handling the millions of gallons of U.S. nuclear wastes produced over the past thirty years. Even Carter's use of the word "disposal" is a distortion, in that present technology at best offers only risky waste "management" and storage; disposal, in the sense of elimination, is as yet beyond our skill.

Many of Carter's stands on nuclear energy were established in response to the growing threat of international nuclear proliferation, and to the growing public concern about it. The President-elect said he would make "no *new* commitments for the sale of nuclear technology or fuel to countries which refuse to forgo nuclear explosives, to refrain from national nuclear reprocessing," or to accept International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. (Emphasis added.) He will, he said, "support a strengthening" of those safeguards and of IAEA inspection authority. That authority today rests on the voluntary compliance of member nations and is largely a detection rather than a prevention system as regards the diversion of nuclear materials for atomic weapons. Although Carter promised he would "seek to renegotiate our existing agreements as a nuclear supplier," thus implying that these agreements do not contain adequate safeguards, he did not say that he would abrogate existing contracts if customer nations balked at the changes he might propose.

A cornerstone of Carter's anti-proliferation policy is his opposition to the sale to other nations of plants for either uranium enrichment or nuclear fuel reprocessing. He does not oppose the establishment of multinational enrichment plants, multinational nuclear waste storage areas, or multinational nuclear fuel reprocessing facilities. In fact, he has pledged to "explore" such options, and has even proposed that we initiate an experimental program of international plutonium reprocessing.

The United States maintains three government-owned uranium fuel enrichment facilities where fissionable uranium 235 in gaseous form is separated from the more common but unfissionable uranium 238, before being converted into uranium dioxide and later fabricated into clad fuel rods for reactors. The nation also has several storage areas for both high- and low-level radioactive wastes, but has no operable fuel reprocessing plant at which used fuel rods, saturated with toxic fission by-products, can be separated into uranium and plutonium for possible reuse.

Operation of reprocessing facilities is extremely hazard-

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ous, expensive, and to date has proven commercially impracticable in the United States. One such plant was built by General Electric, but was written off as a loss when it failed to work; the only commercial reprocessing plant ever to operate in the United States, the Nuclear Fuel Services plant near West Valley, N.Y., was forced to shut down and recently announced that it will never reopen; a third, unfinished reprocessing facility, the Allied-General Barnwell plant near Aiken, S.C., still requires, after enormous cost overruns, auxiliary facilities costing an estimated $500 million before it can legally operate.

Whereas Carter's campaign discussion of proliferation did much to make the public aware of the international dangers, his emphasis on preventing the sale of enrichment and reprocessing plants misled many people into believing that by stopping such sales and employing stronger international safeguards agreements, the proliferation problem could be "defused." In reality, by its failure to oppose the export of nuclear reactors, fuels and technology, Carter's proliferation policy will permit the proliferation problem to grow worse, should his diplomatic initiatives for effective controls not meet with immediate acceptance.

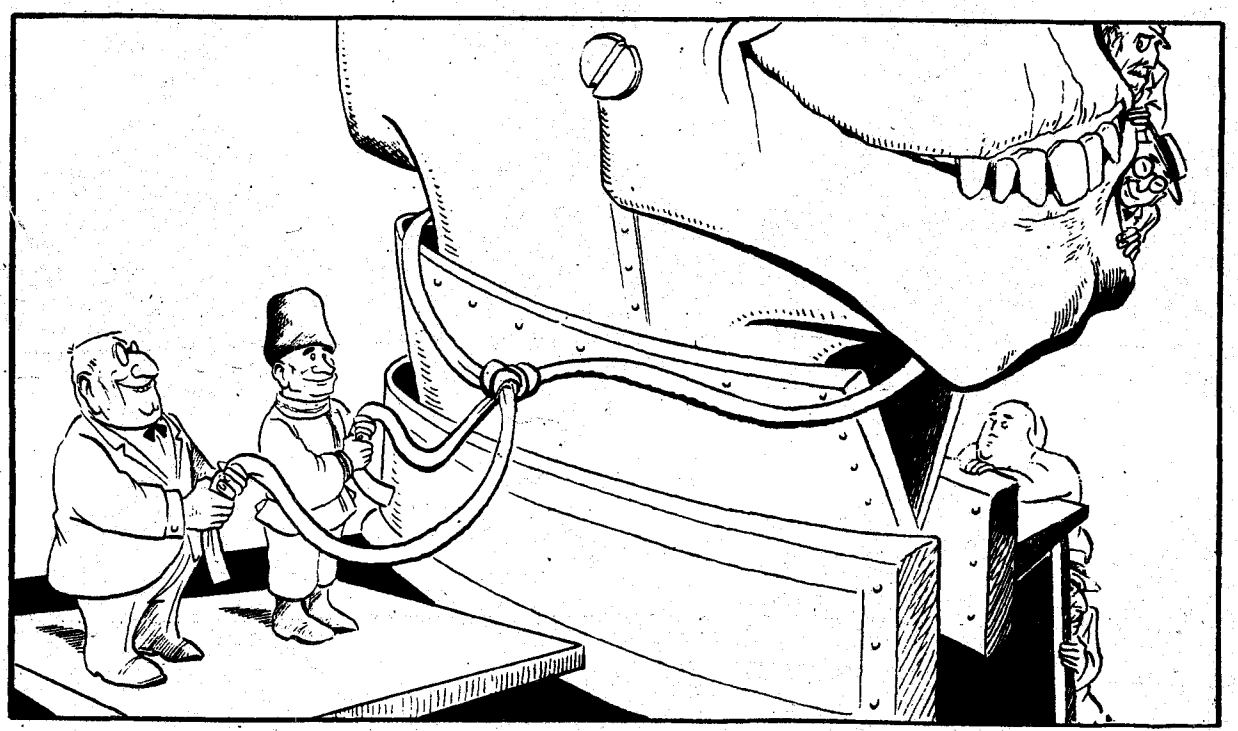
By tacitly equating the danger of proliferation with the danger that reprocessing and enrichment plants might "fall into" the wrong hands, Carter's policy is unresponsive to the fact that any nation, even without a full-scale reprocessing plant, can reprocess spent reactor fuel in small batches. The straightforward chemistry required for reprocessing is within the grasp of any nation, and the only ingredient needed is spent reactor fuel or highly enriched uranium, plus a willingness to risk the danger that workers and their environment might be irradiated. Thus Carter's outspoken opposition to the sale of reprocessing and enrichment technology, while he condones the continued sale of nuclear technology and reactors, leaves a major gap in the battlements he is supposedly erecting against proliferation.

A complete ban on nuclear exports would be desperately resisted by the U.S. nuclear industry, which is currently suffering from a severe shortage of new domestic reactor orders. With nuclear power plants selling for $1 billion or more, the nuclear industry can be expected to make every effort to prevent the closure of this loophole in the President's proliferation policy.

Carter has discussed reprocessing in the context of proliferation and economics, rather than as a special environmental hazard, and has suggested that economics rather than environmental risk is the primary criterion for deciding whether plutonium can be justified as a reactor fuel. His analysis seems to ignore the fact that routine and accidental radioactive releases from large reprocessing plants will result in irreversible environmental pollution, regardless of whether those plants are operated by the International Atomic Energy Agency or by the United States.

Furthermore, those plants will create large quantities of separated plutonium which may be stolen by criminals or nations bent on weapons manufacture, and the thefts may occur before or after the plutonium is incorporated into mixed oxide fuels. In fact, the worldwide shipment of mixed oxide fuels as a result of multinational reprocessing will mean that determined parties could even use unfissioned mixed oxide fuel as a raw material from which to separate plutonium, being thus spared the more difficult reprocessing of plutonium from spent fuel. This could be done in small batches in secret laboratories.

At the least, multinational reprocessing will bring plu-



Vadillo, Siempre (Mexico)

The Leash on Proliferation

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tonium into worldwide use as an article of commerce and will greatly enhance the risks of pollution. On environmental as well as proliferation grounds, a sound decision on reprocessing will not be reached by choosing between multinational and national reprocessing plants but by making an abiding decision to forgo nuclear fuel reprocessing entirely.

To forestall the developing nations from building or buying their own reprocessing plants, Carter has stated that "the United States should . . . with other countries, assure an adequate supply of enriched uranium" to those countries by enlarging federal enrichment facilities. But this suggestion fails to recognize that, with Europe building new enrichment facilities closer to many developing countries than our facilities, the bottleneck in supplying foreign reactors with fissionable fuel is likely to be an eventual shortage of high-grade uranium ore, rather than a lack of services to enrich it. Domestically, the United States has recently lifted a ban on importing uranium because of our own uranium shortage, so it would be foolish to provide it for export. When world supplies of high-grade uranium are exhausted, foreign nations, which will by then have made large nuclear investments, will resist attempts to dissuade them from sharing in the plutonium technology that is so useful for both bombs and for fueling hazardous breeder reactors.

The most effective way for the United States to stop nuclear proliferation is to stop providing other countries with reactors, fuel and nuclear technology, and to exert the strongest possible sanctions against other nuclear suppliers, thereby obliging them to follow our lead. Equally important in preventing proliferation would be a public admission by the United States that nuclear power in light water reactors is a failed technology, to be followed by a moratorium on nuclear plant construction and the phase-out of those plants we have already mistakenly built. Such an example would do more to influence other countries to forgo nuclear power than could any World Energy Conference, such as the one Carter has proposed. Otherwise, countries now ordering nuclear reactors may well be simply buying nuclear bombs on the installment plan.

Carter's unwillingness to foreclose the reprocessing option; his failure to oppose the breeder reactor as being an environmental menace; and his receptivity to the use of plutonium as fresh reactor fuel, definitely separate him from the ranks of nuclear opponents and environmentalists. Given this policy, it would be quite consistent of Carter at some later date to take steps that might irrevocably precipitate the plutonium economy that anti-nuclear activists fear.

The President-elect's choice of former AEC Chairman James R. Schlesinger as special Presidential assistant on energy matters, and even to direct a national energy super agency, only intensifies that concern. It is little wonder that this incongruous appointment has been cheered by nuclear proponents like Craig Hosmer, former ranking Republican member of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, who recently called Schlesinger a "smart, tough-minded guy," who will "rev up the nuclear business once again."

While AEC chief, Schlesinger presided over the agency's vigorous promotion of nuclear energy, and worked for major increase of funding for the fast breeder reactor. Under his guidance, the AEC fostered the international spread of nuclear material, thus helping create the proliferation problems which the new President proposes to solve by appointing none other than James R. Schlesinger. It is an ominous portent that the door to further nuclear escapades remains ajar. □

FISSION ON THE RIGHT

Richard Viguerie's Bid for Power

ALAN CRAWFORD

"I want a massive assault on the Congress in 1978. I don't want any token effort. We now have the talents and the resources to move . . . against Congress in 1978 in a way that's never been conceived of." The man who spoke those words—fund raiser Richard A. Viguerie—is the one who, on the last day of the Republican convention, called a press conference in Kansas City to announce his intention to seek a spot on the Presidential ticket of the American Independent Party. He wanted, he said, "to give conservatives somebody to vote for in November." Two weeks later, in Chicago, Viguerie and his handful of lieutenants launched an eleventh-hour bid to seize control of the AIP, formed in 1968 as a vehicle for the Presidential ambitions of George Wallace.

As the convention's keynote speaker held forth on the dangers of "atheistical political Zionism" ("the most insidious and far-reaching murderous force the world has ever known"), Viguerie's people moved briskly among the delegates, offering Viguerie's valuable mailing lists in exchange for the nominations of Dallas columnist Robert Morris for President and Viguerie for Vice President. The party regulars, resentful of the wealthy newcomers, rejected both Morris and Viguerie, to nominate the ticket headed by Lester Maddox.

It was for Viguerie and friends the latest in a long

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year of political disappointments, with the November elections—another setback—yet to come. But they did not despair: as President Ford used to tell himself during his primary fight with Ronald Reagan, they believe the momentum is with them. And it may be.

Having amassed a small fortune in direct-mail fund raising, Viguerie now enjoys a position of leadership that he could never have attained within the GOP. He has become the prime mover behind what he likes to call the "New Right," a loosely tied group of political action organizations created to compete with the traditional center of power on the American Right—the Republican-oriented American Conservative Union, *National Review* and *Human Events*.

Four years ago, existing conservative organizations—most of them associated with the ACU group—raised about $250,000 for the 1972 Congressional races. In 1976, the new groups alone raised close to $5.6 million. And Richard Viguerie is why.

A virtuoso in the advertising medium that ranks third behind television and the newspapers, he maintains a staff of 250 nonunion employees in Falls Church, Va., to send out 50 million pieces of mail each year from 250 mailing lists that contain the names of 10 million Americans. Viguerie brings in at least $25 million a year for his growing list of clients; he raised $6 million from 1974 to 1976 for George Wallace. Other clients have included Citizens for Decent Literature, Conservative Books for Christian Leaders, the National Rifle Association and No Amnesty for Deserters—names which reflect Viguerie's political concerns.

Teamed up with the Nixon administration's OEO chief Howard Phillips, Wisconsin advertising man Paul Weyrich and Colorado brewer Joseph Coors, Viguerie may well be the most important individual on the American political Right. As one Capitol Hill conservative sees it, "The real effect of the Watergate campaign reforms has been to increase the power of one man—Viguerie. Once you have limited the amount of money that big contributors can contribute, it becomes necessary to reach thousands of small contributors. And Viguerie, probably more than anyone else, is the proven master at this. One California Congressman, in fact, tells me that [the newly elected Rep. Robert K.] Dorman got $65,000 from Viguerie organizations alone. That's how important Viguerie is."

Son of a Texas petrochemical executive, the 43-year-old Viguerie boasts that his political orientation was "cemented by Joe McCarthy." A Roman Catholic, he recently moved his family out of their $165,000 home in Maryland to escape its "liberal-permissive neighborhood," and withdrew his two daughters from the finest public schools in the Washington area to enroll them in a distant Protestant school that teaches the Bible an hour a day.

His attempt to seize control of the American Independent Party in late August was "to deny Ford the Presidency," according to Howard Phillips, by inducing enough conservative Republicans to abandon the incumbent for a Viguerie-appointed AIP candidate. But it was also part of a long-range plan to destroy the GOP and replace it with a "New Majority" of blue-collar workers, urban ethnics and disgruntled GOP Reaganites. Thus will Viguerie "save the Western world." He once said: "I get up in the morning, and that's my goal until the sun sets." To that end he has formed his own political action organizations, including Phillips's Conservative Caucus and a slick magazine, *Conservative Digest*, to publicize "New Majority" activities. These organizations were necessary, Viguerie explains, since the money he had raised in the past for existing conservative groups ("tens of millions of dollars") was having no effect.

That, Viguerie argues, is because conservative Republicanism is political poison. It cannot be marketed because a rigid adherence to the free-enterprise system has caused traditional conservatives to overlook an entire segment of the American electorate—the blue-collar "social conservative"—who shares with traditional conservatives an opposition to busing, gun control, abortion and détente. If only conservatives would surrender some of their attachment to free-market economics and their distrust of labor unions and federal power, Viguerie believes, there would be more than enough agreement between the blue-collar workers and the Reaganites to form a powerful new party. "I'm willing to make concessions to come to power. That's what a coalition is. . . . We're going to have to be willing to use the government to stimulate the economy more than I think we should in order to get the votes. . . ."

And the votes are indeed there, according to Viguerie's unofficial theoretician, Kevin Phillips, a former Nixon campaign aide who is credited with formulating the "Southern strategy" that won the traditionally Democratic South for the GOP in 1968 and 1972. Now a syndicated columnist, pollster and author, Phillips is frequently linked with *National Review* publisher William A. Rusher as the two chief publicists of the "New Majority" vision.

Rusher, publisher of the magazine of which William F. Buckley Jr. is founder and editor, would seem an unlikely member of the hopelessly Middle American Viguerie camp (he is almost certainly the only Wallaceite to belong to two French wine-importing societies) were it not for his book, *The Making of the New Majority Party*, which attempts to demonstrate the inevitability of the GOP's collapse and replacement by a "New Majority" coalition.

Obviously, if such a coalition is to come about, the compromises Viguerie recommends are in store. But until traditional conservatives understand exactly what it is they are expected to surrender, few are eager to commit themselves. And even those who believe they know what is to be compromised balk at what they perceive as an ideological incompatibility between themselves and the "social conservatives" of the Wallace stamp. According to David Keene, a Reagan campaign aide who now teaches at the Kennedy Institute, Harvard: "The [Kevin] Phillips thesis argues that a coalition must be built upon compromise. But the compromises that we conservatives are

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being asked to make go right to the core of what we consider conservatism—our dedication to preserving the free-enterprise system."

Phillips, for example, has dismayed traditional conservatives with the assertion that, if conservatives are ever to achieve power, they must abandon their hostility to "middle-class welfare." The blue-collar worker, he contends, is envious of the government handouts that he sees going to the poor—and unproductive. Conservatives, Phillips argues, must understand this resentment and prepare to support government programs to benefit the "New Majority" constituency.

In this regard, he cites the New Deal as the ideal coalition in American political history, because it redistributed wealth from the top to the middle; but it was betrayed, he adds, when "liberals" began to redistribute wealth from the middle to the poor. (Phillips's affection for the New Deal moved the traditional conservative, Hamilton Rogers, to write in the *New Guard* [December 1975] that the "New Right" does not even share the political genealogy of American conservatism. Instead, Phillips writes, the "New Right" descends not from Hamilton and Taft but from Andrew Jackson, William Jennings Bryan, Franklin Roosevelt, Truman and Wallace!

The "New Majority" envisioned by Phillips, Viguerie and Rusher would therefore support middle-class welfare and further government intervention in the economy, as long as such practices were favored by the "New Majority" constituency. To traditional conservatives that amounts to throwing out the baby with the bath water. Or, to quote a working paper distributed at a recent gathering of American Conservative Union state chairmen in Chicago and reprinted in *Human Events*, it is "too high a price for conservatives to pay."

But even assuming that there were no ideological incompatibility between the two factions—as *Human Events* editor Tom Winter, who cites "overlapping constituencies," maintains—traditional conservatives are wary of Viguerie for other reasons. Citing the fact that, during the last campaign, three of Viguerie's most prominent political action committees—Weyrich's Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress (CSFC), Gun Owners of America and the National Conservative Political Action Committee—contributed directly at most 17¢ on the dollar from money ostensibly raised to aid political candidates, they question Viguerie's business practices and, as a corollary, the purity of his motives.

"I am a conservative and I used to be a member of the Capitol Hill 'chapter' of the New Right," wrote Washington attorney Louis W. Ingram, formerly minority counsel for the House Administration Committee, in a letter to all members of the Republican National Committee. "And I am convinced that these people put economic and egotistical self-aggrandizement ahead of national interests." Enclosed were copies of a recent *National Observer* article in which James Perry analyzed the business practices of the three political action organizations referred to above.

M. Stanton Evans, the syndicated columnist and national chairman of the American Conservative Union, also criticizes Viguerie's fund-raising practices. "As far as I'm concerned," Evans said, "the real difference between the two elements is fund raising. Richard Viguerie and the groups with which he is associated believe in massive direct-mail campaigns, involving millions of dollars in overhead and mailing costs, to give away thousands."

Another ACU board member takes a different view: "Even if they were in it only for the money, that would make them less dangerous than they are. Because if they are interested in affecting public policy—and I think they are—then we need to know specifically what they stand for. As yet, they haven't told us."

Pointing to the ease with which Viguerie and his cohorts have, at least publicly, agreed to surrender as essential a part of American conservatism as "the free market," some conservatives dismiss their views as mere electioneering. Others, however, believe they detect something far more serious—a general indifference to ideology, which is apparently of so little concern to "New Right" publicists that they quite willingly broadcast a set of opinions merely to drum up support. And once you accept that, it is easy to believe that, among followers of the "New Right," issues are subordinated to tactical concerns: how power is most easily achieved and forcefully exercised.

Its conservative critics see this apparent indifference to ideology as one of the great problems of the "New Right." The lack of a defined program—and lack of interest in defining one—manifests itself, they say, in an emphasis on "Red Flag" issues, for example, busing and gun control, to the exclusion of more substantive—and complex—ones. "The Viguerie people address only those issues which tend to stir up hostilities among lower-middle-class whites," said Daniel Joy, legal counsel to Sen. James L. Buckley. "But they never address the most important concerns of middle-class Americans of all colors—joblessness and income security. That is what really matters to these people—economic issues. And these are the very issues on which the 'New Right' people say they are willing to compromise."

Howard Phillips of Conservative Caucus defends the emphasis on emotionally charged "social issues" (in tune with Viguerie's own belief that it is impossible to raise money unless you conjure up an enemy), contending that voters are not ideological but motivated by strong leadership—a statement that impresses some traditionalists as a call for demagoguery.

"Busing may be a legitimate issue," said Keene. "But busing per se is not. Our objection to busing should be that it represents the substantive issue of generalized government intrusion into all aspects of our lives. But too often it has been seized upon by Viguerie and Phillips—depending upon whom they are at that moment appealing to—as the *only* issue.

"There is another issue here, too," he continued. "We conservatives who have a strong attachment to economic freedoms do so because it is an outgrowth of our attachment to the freedom of the individual—and this is not necessarily shared by some people within the Viguerie group. They exhibit a definite preference for conformity and a certain lack of tolerance for those whose values or life styles are somehow different from their own."

"The elite is the enemy," is how Rogers paraphrases the thesis of Kevin Phillips's latest book, *Mediacracy*, a

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slashing attack on the "knowledge industry"—bureaucrats, politicians, professors and news media "nonproducers" who are "well-educated and interested in civic action and cultural activities," and all quite outside the "New Right's" pale. (As Viguerie and Phillips define "the People," it is every bit as exclusionary as it was when the new Left claimed to be its champion; the needs of those who are excluded are simply not addressed.)

If, as traditional conservatives believe, the "New Right" is concerned primarily with tactics and power, this bias might be expected to show itself in a preference for style over substance when considering political candidates. That would explain Viguerie's apparent belief that, since Wallace is more closely identified with the blue-collar constituency than Reagan, Wallace is therefore the preferable candidate, although whether he would make the better President is seldom discussed. This preoccupation with style can also explain Viguerie's search throughout the past year for what he calls "a man on a white horse" to lead the "New Majority" party. *Conservative Digest*, which Viguerie publishes and which can be considered an accurate barometer of "New Majority" thinking, has expressed unbounded, if fleeting, enthusiasm for such diverse characters as the Populist Democrat Wallace, the California conservative Reagan, New Hampshire Gov. Meldrim Thomson, "hard Right" Southern Sen. Jesse Helms—even John Connally, the personification of silk-suited wheeler-dealerism. The passing flirtation with Connally led Viguerie into an expensive and humiliating attempt to run the former Texas Governor as a write-in candidate in the New Hampshire primary—as a Democrat!

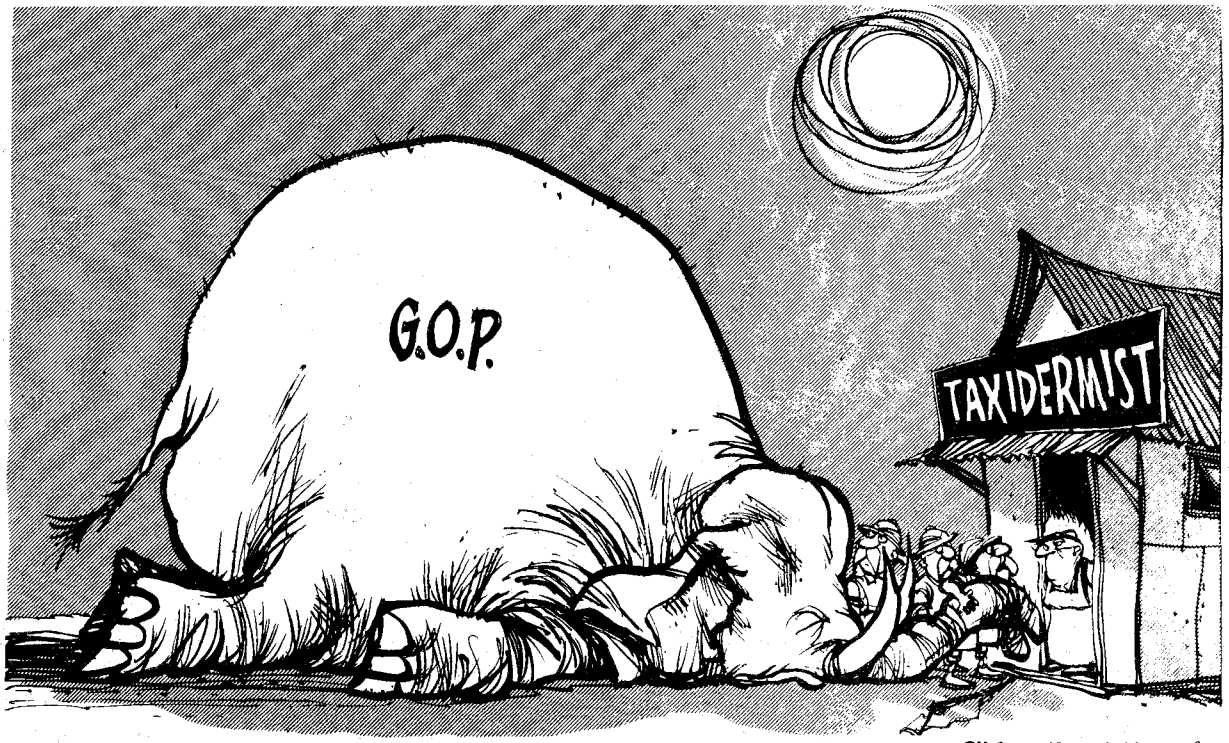
Like Connally, the other stars on which the "New Right" pinned its hopes have, one by one, fallen away. Connally eventually let down the Reaganites by endorsing Ford. Wallace sought the nomination of the Democratic Party and in the end backed Carter. Reagan remained firmly within the two-party system and like all the above named, turned down the chance to carry the "New Majority" banner into battle.

Reagan's determination to stay within the GOP angered the Viguerie forces, and they exploded when he picked as his running mate Pennsylvania Sen. Richard Schweiker. Affecting outrage, CSFC's Weyrich called the selection "a corrupt move demonstrating that Reagan has no political principles," and Howard Phillips denounced Reagan as a "prostitute"—an odd charge, indeed, since it was triggered by Reagan's naming a man whose 1968 Senatorial campaign Phillips himself had managed!

It was then that William F. Buckley Jr., who had tolerantly remained aloof from the internecine warfare on the Right, observed in his newspaper column that perhaps the Viguerie camp's explosion was premature, that Schweiker was in fact a perfectly acceptable selection upon which to build a "New Majority" coalition: he enjoys strong support from labor unions, yet is opposed to busing, gun control, abortion and détente.

"They didn't understand this because they are not sophisticated enough to see into it that far," recalled Keene, who was instrumental in the Schweiker selection. "These are not, you must understand, the most, well, reflective people you're dealing with."

The Schweiker incident points up the essential problem with the "New Right": it doesn't know itself. As one American Conservative Union board member put it: "They talk a great deal about compromise to attract support from those who do not ordinarily identify themselves as conservatives, but they denounce the slightest variation from long-held right-wing dogma."



Oliphant, The Washington Star

"Well, Do You Know *of Somebody Who Could . . . ?"*

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"I should have more objections to Dick Schweiker than they should, if issues were all that went into his selection," said Keene. "He is certainly closer to them, ideologically, than he is to most traditional conservatives. But other factors went into the choice—the man's character, his integrity, his value to a Reagan administration, which meant nothing to the Viguerie people."

The Schweiker incident made clear that, regardless of what its adherents say, the responses and attitudes of the "New Right" are those of reactionaries. Populists they may be, but not conservatives. "They have no ideology at all," said Joy. "They consistently ignore the substantive issues and emphasize only the peripheral ones—gun control, busing, prayer in the schools—which feed the gnawing suspicion among a good many lower-middle-class Americans that somehow, somewhere, something is oppressing them."

Robert Whitaker, a Civil Aeronautics Board employee who heads up something called the Populist Forum, has become a hero to the "New Right." In a *Conservative Digest* article he expresses this aspect of the "New Right" mentality revealingly when he argues that the ideal "New Majority" candidate is one who can lash out at both intellectuals and the business world "with all the pent-up venom of a generation of lower-middle-class people who feel betrayed and exploited. . . ."

The demagogues on the "New Right" are motivated primarily by an undefined hostility to those in power, whether as leaders of Big Government, Big Business or Big Labor, those who are "well-educated and interested in civic action and cultural activities." "The elite is the enemy," as Rogers puts it, and it is this exploitation of hatred and fear that has led them into their adventure among the "gun nuts, food nuts, single-taxers and anti-fluoridationists and a hundred passionate fellows who write in capital letters on red typewriter ribbons" (to quote James J. Kilpatrick—hardly a captive of the "left-wing press"). But even this extreme falange of the "Fright Wing" wanted no part of Richard A. Viguerie and his much-used mailing lists at the AIP convention.

Traditional conservatives to be sure relished the spectacle of Viguerie's repudiation in Chicago, although they were not pleased with his attempt to identify that aggregation of "gun nuts, food nuts [and] single-taxers" as members of the conservative community. "We spent a decade drumming those people out of the conservative camp," said Joy. "And we thought that at long last we were rid of them—and of a great problem. And then here come Viguerie and his friends trying to resurrect the problem."

Do the Viguerie people see no difference between William F. Buckley Jr. and Billy James Hargis? Perhaps not, except that the "elitism" of the former offends their sensibilities. He's clearly too highbrow for them and, Rusher excepted, they profess to be more comfortable among blue-collar types who love beer but hate busing, gun control and "permissiveness" in general—and contribute heavily to Viguerie fronts.

And for that reason they bear watching. For the moment, the Presidency has eluded them. But as Howard Phillips told a gathering of Conservative Caucus members in Chicago not a month ago, their target now is the Congress in 1978. Viguerie has pledged to pour "many times more than $3 million" into the coming Congressional races and he should be taken seriously. He has the talents and the resources to move on Congress in a way "that's never been thought of," Viguerie says. A man who can raise money and passions on the scale he has demonstrated may look like a clown, but it is dangerous to assume that he is one. □

Fort Huachuca: Where Spies Cavort

TOM MILLER

Sierra Vista, Ariz.

If you had wandered through the Huachuca Mountains a century ago, you might have found Apache Indians hunting food and defending their community from encroaching settlers. Proud Apaches roamed through the canyons then, just miles north of the Mexican border. The name "Huachuca" comes from the Sobaipuri Indians, long extinct, and means "place of wind and thunder." Today the major industry in the area is military intelligence, with headquarters at a little-known Army installation called Fort Huachuca. Those same canyons are now used by the U.S. Army Intelligence Center and School as simulated battlefields for training enlistees in psychological warfare.

Tom Miller writes about politics and culture of the American Southwest. His book, The Assassination Please Almanac, *will be published by Regnery this spring.*

For more than half of its ninety-four years as an Army fort, Huachuca enlistees have been black, including the 10th Cavalry which, in 1916 under Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing, invaded Mexico in a search for Pancho Villa. Since the mid-1950s Huachuca has been mainly a classified training camp, and five years ago it took over the Army Intelligence Center and School from Fort Holabird, Md. Communications between America and Vietnam were handled at Huachuca, and instruments of electronic warfare such as the Mohawk pilotless spy plane and infrared photography were tested here.

Adjoining the fort is the town of Sierra Vista (pop. 17,500), noted for its high rents, G.I. bars, and occasional fights—often racially provoked—between bikers and soldiers. Still, within the "intelligence community," as it is called, Fort Huachuca is an important post. It was here that the National Military Intelligence Association (NMIA) was formed a few years ago, and here that the NMIA's most recent annual convention took place. The 2,000-member NMIA is a Pentagon-sanctioned private

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opinion with all four Nixon appointees in the majority, invalidated a civilian complaint procedure that was ordered by a lower court judge to end a pattern of unconstitutional police misconduct against black residents of Philadelphia. The Court concluded that the *failure* of the city of Philadelphia to take action to stop the misconduct did not justify Court intervention, even though the misconduct violated federal rights. Furthermore, the Court doubted that the black plaintiffs had "standing" to seek protection simply because some unknown members of the Police Department, perceiving that the department would not discipline them for violating the rights of blacks, did just that. There was no proof that the particular black plaintiffs would ever themselves be the targets of police violations.

The hypertechnical reasoning in *Rizzo* v. *Goode* and other cases would strike most people not exposed to legal training as having no place in decisions about what the *federal* courts will or should do to protect individuals against loss of their basic *federal* rights. But, consistently, the new Supreme Court majority under Chief Justice Burger, faced with the alternatives, has adopted technical nitpicking over rights enforcement. Some of the Court's decisions have been or may be overturned in part by Congressional action; that is possible where the decision is based on other than constitutional grounds. Other decisions will have to be lived with for awhile. For those of us who learned about law and justice under the guidance of the Supreme Court headed by Earl Warren, it is indeed a very sad time. □

COKE AND CANCER

IT'S UP TO THE STEELWORKERS

FRANK GOLDSMITH and DAN FREEDMAN

Two hundred years ago, a pioneering physician named Percival Potts documented the high incidence of scrotal cancer among English chimney sweeps—the first such research to link cancer with the process of burning coal. The two are still linked today, but as befits the gargantuan development of industry since 1776, the scale of workplace danger is vastly increased. The modern equivalents of Potts's chimney sweeps are the approximately 20,000 men and women who earn their living tending the steel industry's coke ovens. These workers manufacture coke—a substance which, when combined with iron ore in a blast furnace, produces steel ingots. Without coke there would be no steel. Coke is nothing more than coal reduced to a solid residue through high-intensity heating. It is during this process that coal's carcinogenic agents are released.

A University of Pittsburgh study funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) shows that coke-oven workers fall victim to lung cancer at a rate two and a half times higher than that of the general population. The study, written by NIOSH's William Lloyd, also points out that among workers stationed "topside" (on top of the coke ovens where the concentration of particles and gases are the highest), the cancer rate is ten to fifteen times greater than normal.

The steel industry does not dispute these findings. Yet by selectively ignoring available data and playing down the real dangers, the steel industry managed to soften substantially the new U.S. Labor Department Standard for coke-oven emissions released last October. The new standard should have embodied the results of ten years' research and documentation from the perspective of balanced assessment of labor's and management's needs and interests. Instead, the evidence suggests that the standard is little more than a polite tip-of-the-hat to the steel industry. Those who hoped for tough federal regulations that would make coke ovens safer places to work tend to agree that the new standard is a disaster, and that coke-oven workers are no better off today than they were ten years ago when the struggle for emission regulation began.

This controversy is coming to a head just before the February 8th contest for the presidency of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), between the officially favored candidate Lloyd McBride and the insurgent Ed Sadlowski. Coke-oven emissions have not been a major campaign issue so far; these workers represent less than 2 per cent of the USWA's 1.2-million membership. But the genesis of the new standard provides a good example of government-industry collusion and, more important, of the mediocre record of I. W. Abel's USWA leadership as defenders of workers' interests. In short, coke-oven emissions stand as a monument to the kind of complacent union leadership that Sadlowski is running against.

The average coke oven is 20 feet high, 45 feet long and 18 inches across. They're arranged in batteries of ten to 100 ovens above which a "larry car" loaded with coal moves along a track. The larry car pauses along the way to drop coal through chutes into the ovens; there are three to four chutes per oven. This is called the "charging" process. The coal enters the oven and is heated at temperatures between 22,000 and 28,000 degrees Fahrenheit. It stays there for sixteen to twenty hours, whereupon

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a "pushing" machine shoves the mass of residue into a "quench" car alongside the oven. The material is then carried to a quenching plant where it is doused with water, thus sending enormous billows of steam through smokestacks into the open air.

George Clack, a U.S. Labor Department specialist on coke ovens, says that the steam is harmless unless the "quenching" water is polluted. He adds that noxious emissions stem from the charging and pushing processes, and from oven door leakage during coking.

In an issue of *Job Safety and Health* magazine, a Labor Department publication, Clack wrote:

> To draw off hot gases produced when coal pours into the red hot oven during the three to five minute charging processes, each oven has one to two ducts hooked up to a vacuum system under steam pressure. The problem in traditional coke plants is that these ducts and the charging holes themselves tend to become jammed with settled coal or clogged with carbon build-up, or the steam pressure may simply not be enough to draw off all vapors. When any of these things occur, flames, black smoke and gases may shoot 10 feet into the air of the charging holes at the top of the oven. These charging emissions account for as much as 70 per cent of total emissions.

The new Labor Department Standard addresses itself primarily to two aspects of emission control: the amount of noxious substances emitted, and the present level of American coke-oven technology. The standard measures emissions in terms of coal tar pitch volatiles: the total of all particles escaping from the oven. The unit of measurement is micrograms of volatiles per cubic meter of air averaged out over an eight-hour period, the maximum allowable now being 150 micrograms. The old level of 200 micrograms was set in a previous standard; the reduction is "essentially meaningless" according to Steve Ross, editor of *New Engineer* magazine.

Critics of the new standard also disagree that emissions should be measured in terms of *all* air in the coke-oven area. They say a better measurement would be based upon the level of such particularly dangerous elements as Benzo (a)Pyrene, B(a)P, a compound medical and public health authorities agree is one of the most carcinogenic agents coke ovens emit. Ross called B(a)P an excellent barometer for determining how much harmful gas is present. A standard using the more general category of coal tar pitch volatiles obscures the real amount of cancerous material in the air. Only a severe reduction in volatiles, say to 10 micrograms, would suffice to help eliminate B(a)P. However, setting a standard in terms of B(a)P would alleviate any doubt as to how much carcinogen is actually present, and would permit a level low enough for the safety of coke-oven workers.

The Labor Department, through its Office of Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), at one time appeared ready to acknowledge B(a)P as the true measure for a new standard. An OSHA-appointed advisory panel on coke-oven emissions, composed of three representatives each from labor, steel and public-interest groups, issued a series of findings in November 1975 which called for a B(a)P measure.

At that point, the steel industry filed a "minority report" recommending, among other things, a standard based on all air in coke-oven areas, not just B(a)P. The minority report turned out to be almost a duplicate of the subsequently promulgated OSHA proposed standard issued in July 1975. OSHA disregarded the advice of its own advisory committee. USWA President Abel then accused OSHA of following a "politically inspired strategy" on behalf of the Ford administration. But whether Abel and the USWA leadership did all it could to counteract the steel industry's influence on OSHA is certainly questionable.

One key architect of USWA coke-oven policy, Joe Odorcich, is now a member of the McBride slate. Odorcich is director of USWA District 15, which has the highest concentration of coke ovens in the United States, and he chaired the union's Coke Oven Committee. In that capacity he did not fight for implementation of the advisory committee's recommendations. And after the Labor Department announced the final standard, Odorcich and Abel simply remarked that they weren't completely satisfied and would try to win at the bargaining table what they didn't win from OSHA.

In December of 1975, during public hearings into the proposed standard, USWA spokesmen (not including Abel) advocated a standard in line with the advisory committee findings, but dropped support for a B(a)P focus. Only testimony from the National Steelworkers Rank and File Committee—allowed over the objections of Abel—kept the flicker of a B(a)P standard alive.

It is on the question of improving coke-oven technology that the studied negligence of the steel industry, and to a lesser extent the government and USWA, is most dismaying. The steel industry has often denied that engineering technology is advanced enough to design a coke-oven battery capable of practically eliminating emissions. The new standard reflects the industry's assertion that the sections which deal with technological issues favor stopgap measures such as "personal protective" equipment and the construction of spare coke-oven doors in case one proves ineffective during coking. Requiring a plant-wide overhaul—using newer and safer engineering techniques—is never seriously suggested. The feasibility of new methods isn't even discussed.

Steel industry denials notwithstanding, there is plenty of evidence around to suggest that the technology *does* exist. Japan, the Soviet Union and Western European nations are employing one such method known as "dry quenching." In the September 1974 issue of *Journal of Air Pollution Controls,* Benjamin Linsky, a professional engineer, presented a study of dry quenching in which he found: "(*1*) Virtual elimination of air pollutants during quenching; (*2*) elimination of potential water pollution associated with wet quenching; (*3*) improvement in the work environment; (*4*) saving substantial amounts of energy in usable forms; (*5*) producing more usable coke that is superior to wet-quenched coke." Linsky said the dry-quenching process is not used anywhere in the United States.

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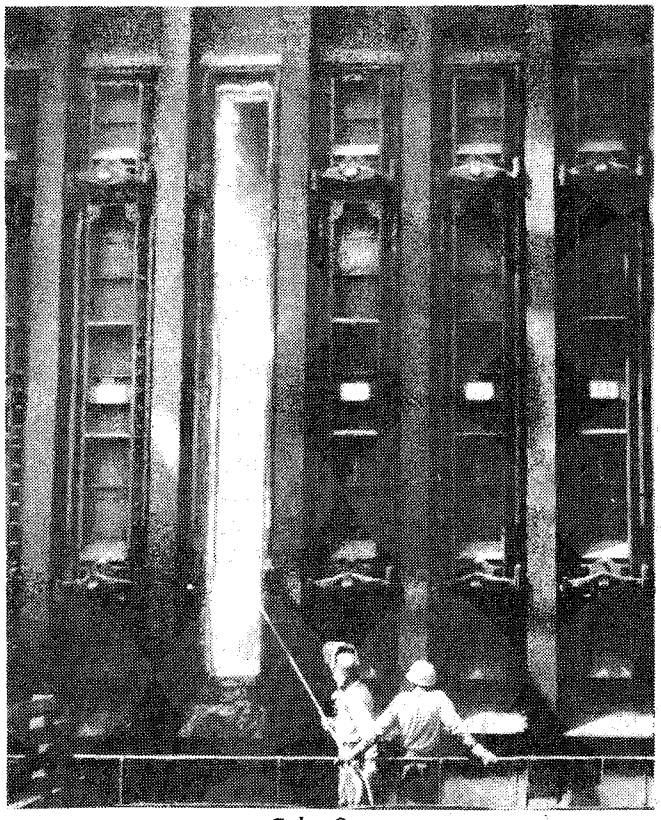
A Washington, D.C.-based firm, Patent Management Inc., has been trying to sell Soviet technology—including dry quenching—since 1968. Richard Bremmer, the director of dry-quenching technology for Patent Management, admits to being puzzled as to why no U.S. companies have bought the technology. He says he has sold the process to Nippon Steel in Japan, and that a number of U.S. companies have sent representatives to Japan to observe dry quenching.

Another important advance in coke-oven technology



Coke Ovens

which has been ignored by the steel industry is "direct pipelining" during the charging process. Direct pipelining would eliminate the larry car method of dumping coal through an open chute—already noted as one of the worst sources of B(a)P emissions. It introduces coal into coke ovens by sending it through long, airtight pipes sealed to the oven's bottom. In the August 1974 issue of the *Journal of Air Pollution Controls,* Benjamin Linsky and Larry Kertcher, a steel pollution control expert, documented direct pipelining as the safest method of charging coal.

Linsky and Kertcher calculate that direct pipelining would have a capital cost approximately 10 per cent less than the larry car method, and would increase coke production by a third. They also said that adapting existing ovens to the new technology would increase coke costs by 11 per cent—not an impossibly large amount.

Could the Labor Department have been afflicted with the steel industry's tunnel vision when it neglected even to consider new technology in the standard? Former OSHA Administrator Morton Corn has informally acknowledged that while investigating technical aspects of the new standard, OSHA relied solely on steel industry evaluations of what could be done in terms of revamping coke plants with new equipment.

Abel and the USWA could have learned about these technological advances through their foreign colleagues in the International Labor Organization or the steel unions in countries using the new methods—Japan and West Germany, for instance. Since the end of World War II, however, the USWA maintains only minimal contact with their trade union colleagues in other nations, lacking sympathy in particular with the socialistic ideology of the European unions.

Throughout the long and arduous procedure of hearings, advisory committee meetings and the like, the steel industry has consistently pleaded that any implementation of new technology, even the modest reforms in the Labor Department's 1975 proposed standard, would be too costly and that in any case the technology just doesn't exist.

One example of this attitude is Bethlehem Steel, the nation's second largest steel producer. Bethlehem operates a steel railroad car plant in Johnstown, Pa. The plant and coke ovens employ 11,000 Johnstowners, forming the hub of the city's economic life. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER) worked out an agreement in 1972 whereby Bethlehem would clean up coke-oven pollution in conformity with DER standards. Bethlehem was given four years to comply. When DER came back in February 1976, they found the company had made no progress whatsoever. The state of Pennsylvania is currently suing Bethlehem for failure to implement the agreement.

A *Wall Street Journal* article, on April 7, 1974, reported that instead of cleaning up the coke ovens, "Bethlehem made a push for passage of the proposed amendments to the state's anti-pollution code, noting that 'limited life' and 'grandfather clause provisions' would serve to save many jobs by allowing continued operations. . . ." Between 1972 and 1974, the Johnstown *Tribune-Democrat* ran several stories reporting threats by Bethlehem to pack up and move to Sparrow's Point, Md. because anti-pollution laws rendered their plant financially unprofitable. The threats raised doubts about Johnstown's economic future that were resolved only in 1974, when Bethlehem decided to stay. Some observers suspect that the company remained because Maryland is also a tough enforcer of pollution-control laws. In addition, Bethlehem would have had to deal with one of the more aggressive Steelworker locals at Sparrow's Point.

Despite the steel industry's claim of poverty, OSHA issued an inflationary-impact statement on the reduction of coke-oven emissions last March that found "the inflationary impact is small and therefore will not disrupt substantially the income and consumption patterns of the economy." OSHA estimated the cost of instituting their proposed standard at $240.6 million and added that the proposal would create 5,000 jobs. Abel failed to pick up this potential economic boost for his union at a time when the Steelworkers are besieged by increasing layoffs and demands for higher productivity. This and other such failures on the part of Abel and his underlings further

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convince the insurgent forces that Abel is too close to the steel industry.

In examining the half-truths and obfuscations fostered by some of the parties in this dispute, one cannot lose sight of the effect B(a)P and other carcinogens have on the lives of those who work in coke plants. In Johnstown, many workers have no hope of escaping from coke-oven carcinogens. They breathe them during work; they're exposed to them in their neighborhoods after work; and if they want to transfer to the coal-car plant, they find they must surrender plant seniority which is the only ladder of success working men and women possess.

In 1975, the DER took air samples from various points in Johnstown. Using the coke plant as their central locus, the department found the closer one came to the plant, the higher the concentration of B(a)P. Downtown Johnstown's B(a)P rating ran five times higher than that of the suburbs. As might be expected, the majority of Johnstown blacks and working-class poor live near the plants.

Blacks not only tend to live closer to the plant but more black workers (16 per cent) tend to work in coke plants than their white counterparts (4 per cent). The Pittsburgh study also found that out of all workers surveyed in the coke plants, "18.1 per cent of nonwhites were employed at full-time topside jobs to 3.4 per cent of whites."

In line with its traditional "last hired, first fired" policy, the steel industry tends to put newly hired women workers right into coke plants. Claudia Prieve, a USWA staff industrial hygienist, testified at the hearings on the proposed standard late in 1975. She said:

> More and more women, many of child-bearing age, are being employed at the coke ovens. On some batteries, as much as 20 per cent of the workforce already is made up of women in such capacities as larry persons and lid persons . . . (and) Benzo(a)Pyrene is a demonstrated transplacental carcinogen that could infest the fetus of these women coke workers.

Such discrimination primarily affects women, blacks and the young. Yet fear of loss of seniority keeps many of the older workers inside the coke plants even though opportunities to transfer may exist. The NAACP took the steel industry and the USWA into court for their rigid adherence to strict interpretations of department- rather than plant-wide seniority. Loss of seniority implies not only a wage loss but a loss in fringe benefits.

The right of coke-oven workers to transfer from the ovens to other steel mill departments before becoming sick was recommended by the advisory committee, but dropped in the OSHA proposed standard. In both of these recommendations, coke workers could transfer without loss of wages or seniority. But the final OSHA standard dropped the whole issue and stated that it properly belongs at the bargaining table. Odorcich agreed with OSHA's position, but Jim Balanoff, president of Local 1010 Inland Steel, the largest USWA local union, and aspirant to replace his insurgent colleague at District 31, Director Ed Sadlowski, disagrees: "The standard is deficient because it doesn't allow workers to transfer out of the ovens prior to their becoming sick. Coke-plant workers should have the right to transfer out of the ovens at any time to other departments before they get sick, without any loss of pay or seniority."

Steel companies deal with work-related cancer in much the same way they approach coke-oven technology: they simply choose not to recognize its existence. William L. White, top health and safety counsel for U.S. Steel, offered an observation that smacks of Catch-22. In a discussion of the Occupational Safety and Health Act at the New York City Bar Association, White said that statistics show that 85 per cent of all disabling injuries and illnesses result from unsafe actions by workers, not unsafe conditions. Whose statistics are these? The U.S. Steel Corporation's, of course.

But how angry can one be at the steel industry for acting like a steel industry? Given the interests of big steel, aren't its actions to be expected? Perhaps one should look for solutions to workplace carcinogens only in the appropriate quarters, the steel industry not being one of them.

The USWA, however, most certainly should be one of them. And the USWA's record in fighting for a good standard is unquestionably spotty. There's something to be said for the positive side of the ledger: Abel *did* come out with some strong statements after the proposed standard was released: Abel *did* direct experts on his staff to give testimony during the various hearings. He chose not to testify himself. When the Johnstown USWA joined the Johnstown Area Regional Industries organization in challenging the DER ruling, the international office of the USWA pressured them to take a better stance.

Yet these examples are offset by missed opportunities to pursue the issue actively. On occasion, the union has even disciplined its members for speaking out. Daniel Hannon, a past president of the USWA local in Clairton, Pa., was removed from the USWA's coke-oven team for speaking out in public as a private citizen. Abel then sent a memo to all international staffers warning them against taking an independent line. He apparently never considered mobilizing Steelworkers through letter-writing campaigns, attendance en masse at coke-oven hearings, or in any other manner so as to force OSHA to pass a strict standard in keeping with the advisory committee recommendations.

The insurgents aligned with Sadlowski feel there's a link between the union's weak position on coke-oven emissions and the controversial Experimental Negotiation Agreement—an agreement to submit potential problems to binding arbitration instead of striking. It's not that there's a direct connection, say the insurgents; it's simply that the cozy relationship between labor and management that is fostered by the ENA is evidently in operation in the coke-oven controversy.

The USWA says it won't go to court over the new standard, preferring to take the matter up at the next contract negotiation session scheduled for this summer. The next move, then, is up to the Steelworkers themselves when they go to the polls on February 8. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

We're All Narcissists

GENIUS AND LUST: A Journey Through the Major Writings of Henry Miller. *By Norman Mailer. Grove Press. 576 pp. $12.50.*

WYSTAN CURNOW

Mailer says his is not the first. There was Durrell's *Henry Miller Reader*, in 1959. But that was without benefit of the pornography, of the best Miller. In those days, dark days, the courts kept the culture clean; in these the market keeps it dirty. Durrell picked out the clean, Mailer picks the dirty bits—they *are* different anthologies. Mailer says this, though he doesn't say why there need be an anthology at all. Most of Miller is in print and readily available in paperback, so what do we want with this fat hardback of swatches from ten books, themselves fat enough? Are novels whole cloth from which lengths may be cut to order?

On the spine: *Genius and Lust*: Mailer/Miller. In that order. This Norman Mailer is no ordinary editor-anthologist. On the front jacket: "A Journey Through the Major Writings of Henry Miller" *by* . . . A tour guide then. Between the covers, broken by long stretches of Miller, a commentary by Mailer, pointing to this and that. Something like a hundred of the more than 500 pages of *Genius and Lust*. The commentary is almost a book within a book. So one good reason for this fat hardback is this: it is Mailer's latest work. And then the extent of the commentary is not to be measured in pages alone. Whether he writes one or 100 pages, any editor takes possession, lays his authorship over another's, so that his book, his anthology, is in its entirety a commentary of sorts. The more so in this case, because Mailer's career has always been more authored than most. What Mailer means by this book at this time is a matter of some interest. Borges has a story about a 20th-century French novelist who was writing *Don Quixote* word for word. As the product of a modern French mind, it was to be read, however, as a modern work and therefore original. The story has to do with literary history and, as such, has a bearing on *Genius and Lust*. That's to say, Mailer steps out now in 1976 in patchwork pieced together from thirty years of Miller's fiction and invites comment as to his own style.

America's astronauts put all their bets on a rationality so synched with the laws of nature as to yield to men experiences hitherto reserved for angels. But the descent, decontamination, the return to a society desperately out of synch with the laws was abrupt enough to force, in some, a typical reversion. Demobbed, they enlisted as evangelists for the supernatural—be it Baptist or extrasensory. Much as student radicals would revert to Jesus freakdom, Hare Krishnahood, etc. If there's a cultural paradigm here, it is one Mailer spoke to in *An American Dream* maybe best of all. That novel came decked out in Gothic. Dark towers, beckoning moon-angels, a style like this:

> The afterbreath, lying on her body, floated on a current of low heavy fire, a sullen poisonous fire, an oil on flame which went out of her and took me in. Invariably a groan came out of me like the clanking of chains, my mouth on hers, not sobbing but groping for air. I always felt as if I had torn free some promise of my soul and paid it over in ransom.

and a Byronic hero pitched against the Dark Forces which run America and make ghoulish mockery of the law. Rojack is a modern Manfred. Mailer spoke of such a paradigm, but he never fell afoul of it. Not so the Gothicism that infects most of the big movies and novels of the moment. *The Exorcist* would send us shit-scared back to a Church that really knew its business. Disaster movies would swallow us in the Negative Sublime. If we let them, which we plainly do. The point is that *An American Dream* now takes its place more clearly among the stories we are telling ourselves than it did when it was first published. Or maybe it just seems that way now that it is a different novel.

Miller's, too, are different novels now and similarly easier to talk about. That was presumably what was on Mailer's mind when he decided to take a turn as editor and critic. Miller's novels were let out of the closet in the early 1960s, and much has occurred to alter the context in which we read them. We have a New York where food and sex are the most available commodities: "Twice a day, Sundays included, the show goes on. . . . The Minsky brothers are dedicated to giving entertainment. Hershey Almond bars are always on tap, good before or after you jerk off." (*Sexus*) Minskys' has become an industry, Miller's hyperboles all but matters of fact:

> Men and women promenading on the sidewalks: curious beasts, half-human, half-celluloid. . . . Smiling through life with that demented, glazed look in the eyes, the flags unfurled and sex flowing sweetly in the sewers. I had a gat with me and when I reached Forty-Second Street I opened fire. Nobody paid any attention. I mowed them down right and left, but the crowd got no thinner. The living walked over the dead, smiling all the while to advertise their beautiful white teeth. (*Black Spring.*)

Hoochie-coochie Cleo becomes thousands of Topless & Bottomless broads, mysterious Sylvia of *Sexus*—"you are sucking the life out of a woman . . . you are incapable of giving love"—becomes Kate Millet of *Sexual Politics*—"exploitative character . . . juvenile egotism." Mailer's own commentary had its beginnings in his reply to Millet in *The Prisoner of Sex* (1971), and one of its endings in the meat grinder of a Vivian Gornick (*Village Voice*, December 1976) for whom Mailer, Miller, Roth and Bellow are to a man narcissistic misogynists. Miller, Mailer concedes, *is* a narcissist, though he takes pains to say what he means by that. Narcissism, according to Christopher Lasch in a recent review-article, "holds the key to the consciousness movement and to the moral climate of contemporary society. . . ." And "The coming together of narcissists," adds Mailer, "is the natural matrimony of the Technological Century." *Genius and Lust* is variously addressed to what Tom Wolfe is calling the Me decade and to the therapy supermarket which currently passes for a counter-culture.

That the fiction impinges upon our sense of contemporary reality is not the major issue with Mailer; rather, knowing it, he grasps the opportunity to make large claims for Miller as an artist. These have been made before, but not with quite the authority and conviction Mailer commands. It is, of course, not

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before time. Miller was neglected even after the *Tropics* became legally available and volumes of *The Rosy Crucifixion* began to appear, and his continued omission from the canon of modern American literature has been a major critical scandal. Mailer means to do something about this. His first pages are thus busy with comparisons and contrasts. These are brief, often specific, and usually telling—especially several concerning Hemingway. Mailer may appear to treat writers like horseflesh—there are, of course, worse ways—but when, as here, the style and personality of the writer are at once congenial to the critic and crucial to the works, the attitude may be more than adequate for the job of sketching a writer's place in history.

Mailer devotes most of his space and the best of his thinking to an interpretation of the five novels that make up Miller's *Prelude*. Here is a summary:

> With his home-grown family strictures against sexuality, a part of Miller had to see sex as equal to disembowelling a garbage can. It is his achievement that he didn't end as a rapist, a suicide, or a monk. Instead he made what moves he could to extricate himself from a doomed relation to sexuality. . . . It is social artifice he would slay first, and hypocrisy, and all the cancers of bourgeois suffocation. . . . Yet the enigma of woman's nature . . . is that women respond to him, . . . But we are far from arriving at the truth of him. He is not Henry Miller who can sublimate murder into sex, and nothing more. No, he is Henry Miller, the man of metamorphoses. . . . Soon he will dive into the pit of recognizing that there may not be a geological fundament in the psyche one can call identity. Like June, he will have to recreate himself each morning, and soon realizes he has been doing it all his life. . . . Now, he is emerging as a narcissist at loose in the uncategorizability of his own experience. (Both he and Mona are narcissists and) in the profoundest sense, one narcissist is never ready to die for the other. It is not love we may encounter so much as fine tuning. . . . No love in literature is so long recounted as his 1600-page affair and marriage and separation from his Mona. *The Rosy Crucifixion* becomes one of the greatest failures in the history of the novel.

That conclusion, which praises with faint damns, would annoy were it not for the fact the drama Mailer makes of Miller's personality requires it. Miller's claim to greatness is that he opened up a large and largely uncharted area of the modern psyche. It took extraordinary honesty, courage, strength and insight to do this; those qualities are in the writing. However, they come from a narcissism that is also the source of the failures. The narcissist's obsessive inner dialogue obscures his perception of psychic reality. Hence Miller knows not that greater love "which will go forth whether one wills it or not." He's unable to make Mona "quite real to us, as novelistically real as Anna Karenina or Emma Bovary." He indulges in "avalanches of over-writing." Consequently the dirty bits are best; Henry with a hard-on suspends that inner dialogue and makes for the real.

The energy of Mailer's language is a tribute. His argument is original; if it is sometimes less than compelling it is always intriguing. It would be the more convincing but for some surprisingly trivial and timid remarks about Miller's art. Then, maybe it's not so surprising. Among Miller's contemporaries only Faulkner put more pressure on the givens of the novel form, and Mailer is a more conservative artist than either of them. Miller, it appears, disrupted his narrative line out of cussedness, sought a variety of styles out of competitiveness, put "philosophy"—whatever that is—in his novels out of false pride and refrained from "constructing" them from arrogance. Since all these are features of much modernist fiction, what is Mailer on about? I guess he thinks the self-educated boy from Brooklyn wasn't up to giving shape to his explosive creative energies: "No, there is nothing like Henry Miller *when he gets rolling*." (My italics.) Such an idea certainly eases an anthologist's responsibilities, offers him the opportunity to dress his lad in his best clothes. Mona and Henry's story in *Sexus* is now cut to read as continuous narrative; wherever possible the "philosophy" lumps have been left out and the higher flights of style are few. *Genius and Lust* is full of excellent Miller but it implies an author more like your regular novelist than is actually the case.

It's got to be said that even Miller's novels are not whole cloth from which lengths may be cut to order. They do lack the usual structure. If events are more or less in sequence, the action falls short of being an organizing force. Images and subjects recur without becoming either symbols or themes. Partly by default then, it is style that shapes Miller's novels. I mean the talk, talk that is endless, protean in tone and direction, must be interrogated in all its casual transitions if form is to be seen as meaning anything in Miller's fiction. That's not easy if your Miller comes chopped and sliced. Moreover, the routes traveled, the rules of the road, these change from book to book. When *Sexus* is put down and *Nexus* picked up, the time, place and the characters remain the same but the talk has a quite different aimlessness. We walk, Miller says, "against a united world, asserting our dividedness. All things, as we walk, splitting with us into myriad iridescent fragments." "Would I remember? Would I be able, on a sheet of paper, to exfoliate in all directions at once?" Not really, although if we could read both the *Tropics* and *The Rosy Crucifixion*, all at once we would get a good idea of what that might be like. It would be as if things stopped splitting, with us, into fragments. Talk, so conceived, is more than inner dialogue in that it speaks of a narcissism in the nature of things. □

The Bad-Taste Blues

ON BEING BLUE: A Philosophical Inquiry. *By William Gass. David R. Godine. 91 pp. $10.*

AMATEURS. *By Donald Barthelme. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 184 pp. $7.95.*

PHILIP STEVICK

William Gass probably thinks more than any other living novelist about the nature of fiction, its ability or inability to "make statements" or reveal truths or evoke a sense of the physical world. Gass's concern comes partly, no doubt, from the fact that he is a philosopher first and novelist second, more disposed than most of us to inquire into the nature of what he is doing in abstract, systematic ways. It comes also from the kind of pleasure Gass obviously finds in staking out a polemical position eccentric enough to what most people believe so that it causes small shock waves every time he articulates it. It comes, also, from the nature of Gass's talent, a virtuoso talent for exploiting the richness of language not exactly in the service of fable but as its own end. The title story of *In the Heart of the Heart of the Country*, for example, has struck most readers as being won-

Philip Stevick has edited Anti-Story: An Anthology of Experimental Fiction *(The Free Press).*

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BEACHED WHALES OFF MARGATE

One day they just started rolling up,
six pilot whales from way out.
Two hundred people pushed three of them back, oh
it took hours. I tell you all this
because two hundred people usually hurt
what they touch. But not this time.
After it was done, they stood around
for a while, like the men they used to be,
lamenting the three who were dead.
Separateness set in slowly; an aerial shot
would have shown a group moving away
from its center, leaving in ones and twos
toward their large, inconsiderate houses.

Stephen Dunn

derfully evocative of the texture of lived experience in small-town Indiana, a response that Gass professes to disapprove of, insisting that small-town Indiana is not like that at all, his story being a made thing, an invention, answerable not to Indiana but to the implicit laws of its own art. After the fact, one can see how inevitable it is that Gass should now have produced a "fiction" that escapes fable altogether, being a meditation on words, or rather a meditation on a word, the word being "blue."

"Blue pencils, blue noses, blue movies, laws, blue legs and stockings, the language of birds, bees and flowers as sung by longshoremen, that leadlike look the skin has when affected by cold, contusion, sickness, fear. . . ." So he begins, setting the premise for his encyclopedia on blue, a book bound in blue cloth although printed black on white. What the premise sets in motion is an attempt to gather, "celebrate" as Gass puts it, the things of the world which are blue, the things which are called blue, some of which are really blue, some of which are not, the feelings evoked by both seeing and being blue, observations on the aesthetic value of blue, above all speculations on erotic words, books and works of art, since they all arrange themselves under the epithet blue. Gass subtitles his book "A Philosophical Inquiry," but the austerity and the pretense at method stop there. If it is to be judged as philosophical inquiry, the book is grotesque, without rigor or system, self-indulgent in its arrangement, not even very inclusive. (Gass seems almost totally innocent of the musical uses of blue.) The book does, on the contrary, implicitly ask us to respond to it as a fiction, a strange, crabbed, stylized, lyrical, involuted meditation, true not to any abstract principles of orderly inquiry but to the contours of Gass's own mind. Still, there is a kind of method to the book, a miming of philosophical rigor, that gives it much of its charm: "Suppose the name of any maiden's private parts were known to her alone. Suppose the name of Ellen's pout were Rosalie. Then that name, if we came into possession of it, would argue an intimacy for us no parent or lover could overlook, as though we had been privy to the mole of her mount of Venus." Suppose, suppose, Gass writes, like the philosopher before his class, as if unaware that his subject is the magic of words and the elusive consciousness of sex.

The encyclopedic range of the book *is* extraordinary. The word "blue" is as rich, diverse, and unpredictable as Gass says it is. Animals in a season, metallurgic processes, birds, place names, trees, outlines in Matisse—and always moods, and sex. It is perhaps on its sexual content that Gass's book finally invites judgment since he, finally, makes that its most prominent aspect. There is nothing in print which can be trusted on what makes certain passages of erotic realism "work" and others fail, or what gives our dirty words their significance and power—certainly not Lawrence and the Lawrentians, who have their axes to grind. Gass's insights into blue words are the most stylish and ingenious I know, the most consistently interesting, but I am not sure that they can be trusted, either on such matters as the covert meaning of sexual insults or the power of a sado-erotic passage from Hawkes. Still, Gass's discussions of erotic language are not so much meant to be trusted as observed, being the fluid, impressionistic, sometimes crotchety, often arresting opinions of a character, named William Gass, in a fiction by William Gass, which masquerades as philosophical treatise and which finally amounts to an eccentric and ingratiating book, like no other before it, full of grace and wit, displaying a mind in love with language, the human body, and the look of the world.

Donald Barthelme's fiction now stands as the central exhibit of what we have come to call, for lack of anything more resonant or memorable, the "postmodernist" imagination. Widely imitated yet inimitable, he invests his fables, collages and word games with such style that they stand as touchstones for narrative art of the last two decades. Everything that Barthelme has ever done has been well received; even second-rate Barthelme contains so much life and wit that it is difficult to be unreceptive. Still, privately if not in print, more than a few of the admirers of his first three collections, especially the brilliant *City Life*, have felt a measure of disappointment in his latest work. The perils in his method have surely been as obvious to him as to his readers from the start, the fey preciosity that threatens to turn the fictions into stand-up monologues done by a collector of middle-high camp, and the extraordinary facility which threatens to make some of his pieces seem astonishing, and yet forgettable, exercises. Happily, all questions of the direction of Barthelme's recent work are irrelevant to his latest collection, *Amateurs*. It is a gathering of previously uncollected stories, many from the early 1970s. There are no visual tricks, no old engravings, only words. Why Barthelme should have allowed a residue of earlier work to accumulate is impossible to say. But the effect is impressive, a wonderful collection that reads rather more like a companion volume to his earlier *Unspeakable Practices, Unnatural Acts* than it does like a latest stage in a developing career.

There are stories here which have had a remarkable life outside of hard covers, saved in the magazines in which they appeared, passed among friends, savored and alluded to, reread. I am thinking especially of "Porcupines at the University" and "You Are as Brave as Vincent Van Gogh." Readers of Barthelme who remember with fondness an earlier story, a strange and haunting fantasy in which a vast balloon spreads over many blocks of New York streets, acting like some immense Thematic Apperception Test for the people below and above it, should know that there is another balloon story in *Amateurs*, "The Great Hug," different from the previous one, more verbal, less mythic, just as good. Readers who recall with fondness the technical experiments of Barthelme (such as a story called "Sentence" con-

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sisting of a single sentence) should know that there is virtuosity of that kind here, as in a story called "Agreement," which is, except at its end, all questions—and which works, being technically fascinating, funny and poignant. All of the familiar "voices" are here: military and bureaucratic jargon ("The I.G. was a bird colonel with a jumper's badge and a general's pistol belt."); Pop media talk ("I will sit back and watch it climbing the charts, he said to himself. As recorded by Merle Travis. First, it will be a Bell Ringer. Then, the Top Forty. Finally a Golden Oldie."); urban bored ("In the days that followed, Paul discovered a pair of gold cuff links, oval in shape, at the bottom of a drawer. Cuff links, he thought. Could I ever have worn cuff links?"). It is, in other words, a rich, diverse collection, an index not of where Barthelme wishes to move next but of where he has been, when his talent has been most virtuoso and sure of itself.

The collection, by placing itself as it does over the past six years of Barthelme's career, rather than at its leading edge, invites some kind of assessment. I suggest two ways into the question of what Barthelme, in his richest and most inventive period, has amounted to. " 'The world is everything that was formerly the case,' the group leader said, 'and now it is time to get back on the bus.' " So begins the last paragraph of "The Educational Experience." What that sentence does—never mind the context—is to bring together Wittgenstein known, digested, exhausted, and inverted and to couple the Wittgenstein echo with a kind of wit that is quintessentially American, flip, tough, and facile, the kind of wit that we all recognize in its purest form in S.J. Perelman or Woody Allen. The absurdist or nihilist vision in its official European forms has never been particularly congenial to American readers, not that we cannot share its assumptions—most of us in some sense do. It's that other cultures' absurd visions either are funny in ways we cannot respond to or are not funny at all. Even the comedy of Beckett strikes most American readers as being rather strained, forced, stylized out of all human recognition, and not very funny, which is why Beckett is much admired in this country but little read. The special power that Heller, Pynchon and Barth, for example, have brought to the nihilist vision is an American comedy, full of bad taste, wisecracks, ethnic jibes, allusions to Pop culture, pratfalls, stand-up routines, and the kind of inspired ingenuity that takes us, in a sentence, from an inverted Wittgenstein quote, processed through the mind of a tour guide, to the loading of the bus itself. Nobody else does this like Barthelme, who has read everything, whose inventiveness is inexhaustible, and whose wit is both intricate and very funny.

Secondly, Barthelme has made a set of social and emotional responses for the people in his fictions that refract, in some uncanny way, the contours of our sensibility. People in Barthelme cope with technology, the myths of technology, the interruption of technological flow, useless inventions. People in Barthelme cope with media barrages, ideas, spokesmen, official announcements, encyclopedias, short courses, messages. They cope with social names, famous names, improbable names, historical names, product names, codes. They try to eat well—beer and sauerkraut, Colonel Sanders's Kentucky Fried Chicken, herb tea with sour cream, steak and eggs, chicken livers *flambé*. They try to remember, pay attention, start over, figure what to do next. Somehow that rhythm which Barthelme handles so well, of crisis and coping, carries, partly because it is stylized into myth, a potent sense of the callousness and courage, the knowingness and the poor mute innocence with which we meet our own strange world of experience. *Amateurs* will not increase Barthelme's audience and it does not mark a new departure in his career; but it contains the kind of work he does best, so rich and stylish and funny in the execution that it is as good a book as he has done. □

Pieces of a Vietnam War Story

GENE LYONS

Considering how long and obsessively Americans were transfixed by the war in Vietnam it is remarkable how little really good fiction has been written about it. If the economics of novel writing were like those of making movies one would not have to look very far for a reason: the people who put up the money have concluded, and from ample evidence, that nobody wants to hear any more about Vietnam than they have already heard. Since novelists tend to be unreasonable about things like that, it makes sense to look into the question a little more deeply. One of the best ways to do that would be to read the excerpts from Tim O'Brien's novel-in-progress called *Going After Cacciato* that have been appearing in several small magazines over the past year or so, particularly the ones that have been in *Ploughshares* (Vol. 3, No. 1), *Massachusetts Review* (Summer 1976) and *Shenandoah* (Winter 1976).

O'Brien has written about Vietnam before. His 1973 memoir *If I Die in a Combat Zone* was one of the very few first-person accounts about the war by a foot soldier, not to mention a draftee. It is a fine book, remarkably free of the moral posturing and thunderous certainties that so many of us affected at the time. Unlike most young men of the novel-writing classes O'Brien found no exemption from the draft, and when called up, he went. A native of a small town on the prairie of southern Minnesota, O'Brien hadn't the range of acceptable options, legal, illegal or simply pragmatic that were available to the majority of educated men from the suburbs and cities. Not if he wanted to hold his head up on the streets of his home town, that is. So he did, as he explained it in that book, not the easy but almost the inevitable thing. He was sure the war was wrong but he submitted

> by a sort of sleepwalking default. It was no decision, no chain of ideas or reasons, that steered me into the war. . . . I did not want to be a soldier, not even an observer to war. But neither did I want to upset a peculiar balance between the order I knew, the people I knew, and my own private world. It was not that I valued that order. But I feared its opposite, inevitable chaos, censure, embarrassment, the end of everything that had happened in my life, the end of it all.

Fearing chaos, O'Brien went through basic training, became a grunt and took his instinct for order to Vietnam. That was in 1968. Eight years later he is writing fiction about it for the first time, having in the interim published a very fine novel about two brothers, one a Vietnam veteran who lost an eye there, locked in a struggle for psychic and physical survival in the logging country of the Minnesota arrowhead. That book was called *Northern Lights*. Why after the critical success of *If I Die in a Combat Zone* O'Brien's first novel did not gain the wide and serious attention it deserved

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Gene Lyons, who is contributing a monthly column to The Nation, *lives in Little Rock, Ark. He has written for* Harper's, The New York Review of Books, Texas Monthly *and other magazines.*

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is one of those mysteries of the literary world that have no single answer. If O'Brien puts together the elements of *Going After Cacciato* as well and beautifully as the segments that have appeared seem to indicate that he may, the injustice will certainly be undone. He still has his commitment to artistic order, and he has lived through the chaos, the disorder and the murderous sprawl of the war.

Here is how it sounds:

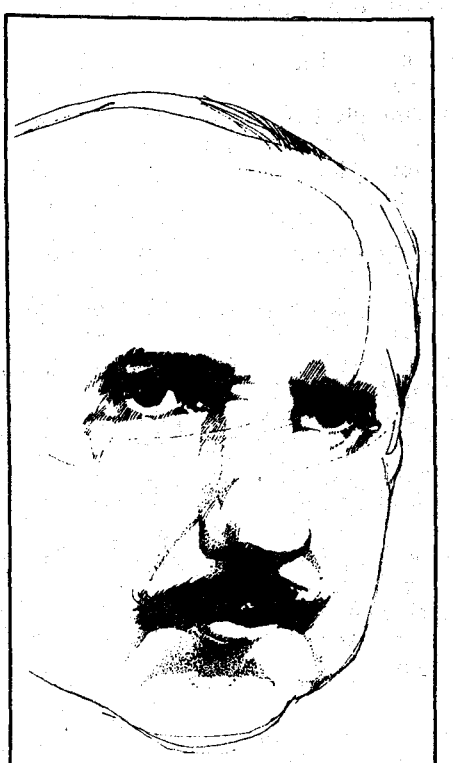
> It was a bad time. Billy Boy Watkins was dead, and so was Frenchie Tucker. Billy Boy had died of fright, scared to death on the field of battle, and Frenchie Tucker had been shot through the neck. Lieutenants Sidney Martin and Walter Gleason had died in tunnels. Pederson was dead and Bernie Lynch was dead. Buff was dead. They were all among the dead. The war was always the same, and the rain was part of the war. The rain fed fungus that grew in the men's socks and boots, and their socks rotted, and their feet turned white and soft so that the skin could be scraped off with a fingernail, and Stink Harris woke up screaming one night with a leech on his tongue. When it was not raining, a low mist moved like sleep across the paddies, blending the elements into a single gray gray element, and the war was cold and pasty and rotten. Lieutenant Corson, who came to replace Lieutenant Martin, contracted the dysentery. The tripflares were useless. The ammunition corroded and the foxholes filled with mud and water during the nights, and in the mornings there was always the next village and the war was always the same. In early September Vaught caught an infection. He'd been showing Oscar Johnson the sharp edge on his bayonet, drawing it swiftly along his forearm and peeling off a layer of mushy skin. "Like a Gillette blueblade," Vaught had grinned. It did not bleed, but in a few days the bacteria soaked in and the arm turned yellow, and Vaught was carried aboard a Huey that dipped perpendicular, blades clutching at granite air, rising in its own wet wind and taking Vaught away. He never returned to the war. Later they had a letter from him that described Japan as smoky and full of bedbugs, but in the enclosed snapshot Vaught looked happy enough, posing with two sightly nurses, a long-stemmed bottle of wine rising from between his thighs. It was a shock to learn that he'd lost the arm. Soon afterwards Ben Nystrom shot himself in the foot, but he did not die, and he wrote no letters. These were all things to talk about. The rain too. Oscar said it made him think of Detroit in the month of May. "Not the rain," he liked to say. "Just the dark and gloom. It's Number One weather for rape and looting. The fact is, I do ninety-eight percent of my total rape and looting in weather just like this." Then somebody would say that Oscar had a pretty decent imagination for a nigger.

Not all of O'Brien's prose is so lyrical as that; no novelist's could be. But everything he writes has a similar leanness and syntactic clarity. Given this and the subject matter of *Northern Lights*, several reviewers were bound to make the inevitable, and I think quite misleading, comparisons to Hemingway. Some readers may, indeed, find echoes of *A Farewell to Arms* in the passage quoted above. ("The war was always the same, and the rain was part of the war.") But if O'Brien has read his Hemingway, and he has, he has also read Joseph Heller, whose giddy nightmare version of World War II probably has had almost as much influence on the way the literate young in this country saw Vietnam as Orwell's *1984* had on the way the generation before them saw the Soviet Union.

For months at a time *Catch-22* seemed a metaphorical guide to the evening news, never more so than when the responsible voice of the father gravely explained the necessity of destroying a village in order to save it. Men like O'Brien came home to find that nobody wanted to hear their stories. In "Speaking of Courage" (*Massachusetts Review*), a soldier named Paul Berlin drives his father's car ten times around the town lake on the Fourth of July because he has no place in particular to go:

> He knew many war stories, a thousand details, smells and the confusion of the senses, but nobody was there to listen, and nobody knew a damn about the war because nobody believed it was really a war at all. It was not a war for war stories, or talk of valor, and nobody asked questions about the details, such as how afraid you can be, or what the particular sounds were, or whether it hurts to be shot, or what you think about and hear about and see on ambush, or whether you can really tell in a firefight which way to shoot, which you can't or how you became brave enough to win the Silver Star, or how it smells of sulfur against your cheek after firing eighteen fast rounds, or how you crawl on hands and knees without knowing direction, and how, after crawling into the red-mouthed tunnel, you close your eyes like a mole and follow the tunnel walls and smell Frenchie's fresh blood and know a bullet cannot miss in there, and how there is nowhere to go but forward or backward, eyes closed, and how you can't go forward, and lose all sense, and are dragged out by the heels, losing the Silver Star.

So O'Brien has chosen to write about Vietnam from the point at which Yossarian left off. *Going After Cacciato* will be part war story and partly a dream vision of what might have been:



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"Paree," the lieutenant murmured. "Cacciato's going to gay Paree—pretty girls and bare ass and Frogs everywhere. What's wrong with him?"

"Just dumb, sir. He's just awful dumb, that's all."

"And he's walking? He says he's walking to gay Paree?"

"That's what he says, sir, but you know how Cacciato can be."

"Does he know how far it is?"

"Six thousand eight hundred statute miles, sir. That's what he told me—six thousand eight hundred miles on the nose. He had it down pretty well. He had a compass and fresh water and maps and stuff. . . ."

"In other words," the lieutenant said, lying back, "in other words, fuckin AWOL."

With Cacciato, of whom the company doctor says he "had missed Mongolian idiocy by the breadth of a single, wispy genetic hair," O'Brien is building a fictive bridge between his own temperamental and stylistic sense of order and the mad, nightmarish world of the Vietnamese War.

With the exception of the *Ploughshares* story all of the others, including the ones from the *Denver Quarterly* (Autumn 1975) and *Redbook* (May 1975 and December 1976) are more or less straightforward war stories. As such they are vivid, exact and frightening. If better realistic fiction has been written about Vietnam I have not seen it. As the extensive quotes perhaps reveal I find O'Brien's style irresistible in both its discipline and its amplitude. When he sounds like Hemingway, it seems to me, he sounds like good Hemingway. And he makes no code of style. Not only does style in itself fail to bring the world to bear, it fails even to serve as a behavioral guide in a world gone badly out of joint.

The most moving scene in *Northern Lights* comes after the protagonist survives his own ineptitude and self-doubts to bring his brother and himself through the Minnesota wilderness during a blizzard. Unable to get his wife on the phone to tell her he is alive he has nothing to do but wait for the state police to pick him up at the small grocery store-gas station on the backwoods highway he finds. So he begins to play a coin-operated bowling machine:

> *Lucky, plain stupid lucky this time.* He fired the disk again, and it bounced back, and he fired it again, again, and the lights flashed and buzzers shrieked, and the clown's face lit in alternating smiles and frowns and tears and grins, randomly, and he kept shooting the disc up the alley until the game went silent.

In his Vietnam War memoir O'Brien doubted that he had anything to offer in the way of conclusions. As a foot soldier, he thought he could confirm neither the belief that war is a tragic necessity that tests men like nothing else does (Hemingway), nor that it is madness, futility and sheer waste (Heller). "Do dreams offer lessons?," he asked. "Do nightmares have themes, do we awaken and analyze them and live our lives and advise others as a result? Can the foot soldier teach anything important about war, merely for having been there? I think not. He can tell war stories." The war story that O'Brien is telling now deserves our attention. □

Literary Toxicity

LUCINELLA. *By Lore Segal. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 117 pp. $8.95.*

MARTIN WASHBURN

Let us, for the sake of modern poets, recognize a Muse of Self-Preoccupation, and let her be named Lucinella. A poetess, Lucinella seems to have been born to wonder why no matter where they go, she and her friends (some with wonderful names: Betterwheatling, Winterneet, Ulla) always seem trapped in the same poets' colony. What makes her endearing, moreover significant, is the helplessly honest humanity with which she registers and assesses her own emotions and social impulses. Always questioning, Lucinella takes us through the many manifestations of her social world, and though she gives it the full benefit of her most intense metaphor—pure light—she is unable to transfigure it. Or, as she says taking a walk early one morning after she has thrown a disastrous party, "The new white light catches a puddle of dog piss. The brilliance breaks the heart." Since her subject matter resists transfiguration due to its baseness, Lucinella ultimately withdraws—a withdrawal termed death only because it is unaccountable by any other word to the world from which she has been speaking.

We are in the presence of a parable. Lucinella has been described as an entrancingly witty anatomy of our (East

Martin Washburn is a free-lance book reviewer.

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Coast) literary life, and it is, but more than that it is a tough little book that knows very well that charm is not enough. A Pilgrim's Progress of sorts, it would be wrong to underestimate the ambitiousness of its myth just because of its unpretentiousness. Like Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* it is concerned with the search for an identity separate from a dangerously neurotic culture. It simply engages the problem from a point on the opposite side of the compass, for while Atwood's heroine dramatically rejects society, plunging into terrible psychic isolation to emerge and accept society, Lucinella, by ceasing to struggle with the powerful pressures her society exercises, quietly surmounts it and rises into her own isolation. (Consider that both writers are on the periphery of the American pressure system, Atwood as a Canadian, Segal—as we know from *Other People's Houses*, her remarkable autobiographical novel published in 1964—as an Austrian refugee; further, of course, as women they have a degree of natural distance from predominately male-created patterns.) To find similarities between Segal's apparent lightheartedness and Atwood's ritual exorcism may only be to say that Segal, as metaphysical architect, has built her church on top of its gargoyle.

It should be stressed that *Lucinella* is not about the whole of literary life but concentrates instead on a narrow, if intense and pervasive, aspect, the side of North American arts which does not differ greatly from the tourist culture produced by that vast Populism known as the American middle class. So Segal's poets are shown to be social phenomena rather than producers; we see them at panel meetings rather than at poetry readings. Lucinella finds herself grinning at her friends' poetic and personal catastrophes because their relationships are so exclusively based on competition. Like butterflies in a confined space they bump into one another and knock the powder off one another's wings. Descendants of terrible, compelling voices, of Rimbaud and Pound, they wait hopefully like leashed dogs for their critic to take them for a walk. Yet in suffering the critic to take the pecking order of the moment seriously they acknowledge that the task of the tourist-critic is not one of literary judgment but that of a booking agent faced with a tight schedule.

Instead of an independent brotherhood of poets, these versifiers seem to favor the inner insecurity of the tourist culture which emphasizes surface and impact at the expense of depth and coherence. These themes and Lucinella's longing for something better are unmistakable during her visit to a department store:

> I take the elevator to the furniture department and visit the chair I cannot afford. I touch the wood. Its temperature adjusts to my blood. My finger follows the slightest shift in the direction of the carver's tool. The carver sits in my soul with his back to me (centuries divide us; and he's never Jewish). He carved these armrests like two halves of an embrace that opens courteously outward, before terminating into formal scrolls.

The chair, principal means of support for poetry, a sitting occupation, is a decorous embrace culminating in literature (the scrolls). In contrast to the throne of poetry, the chair given her by her American lover arrives, "upholstered in turquoise crap with tulips, quilted in gilt thread." Lucinella reacts with the following interesting connection between popular culture and nonbeing: ". . . I tell (William) my theory that kitsch is visited upon our generation because of Adam's second disobedience in swallowing the core of that apple, though god knows god did his damndest to keep us from the knowledge that his secret name is I AM NOT and the corollary nonexistence of our souls exemplified in the stupidity of the proportions, the dishonesty of shape, the venal color and fabric of this kind of furniture. . . ." This is no metaphysical flourish but the heart of Segal's view of American cultural problems.

What hurts the poets most is that in their unqualified acceptance of grants, prizes and colonies they have come close to accepting designation as a socioeconomic group. They grieve because emerging minorities recognize them with some justice as parasitic and as competitors for the limited attention of the culture at large. So they are miserable. Despite his Pulitzer, Meyer sounds like Wordsworth lost in the subway, and despite Winterneet's distinguished expostulations he too must accept narcissism as the profit motive poetry offers up to capitalism as its way of explaining itself.

Nevertheless a kind of enlargement occurs as the book progresses. After Lucinella throws a party at which resident critics tear everyone to shreds—a low from which things can only climb—news comes of a Times Square Block Party. In this first real opening up to the larger world, we see a gala parade in which Old Lucinella, who suffers herself from aphasia, writes happy slogans for celebrant unfortunates. And after that, Lucinella experiences first-hand that vision of the 1950s and 1960s, Total Orgasm from which Betterwheatling protects her by opening up his umbrella. At the end of this we come to the culminating scene of Segal's parable, which as usual happens with deceptively disarming innocuousness. Lucinella is talking to William:

> "By the way," I say, "William, do *you* think I'm a romantic? . . . William, I almost forgot! Did you really

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get the Times Square Prize for the Best Younger Poet?"

"I did indeed," William says, "Lucinella, do you think I *am*?"

"Absolutely!" I answer him. "Pass me a marinated mushroom, please."

I scramble up his trouser leg into his jacket pocket and poke out my head. "I've just learned how to handle terror," I say.

"How?" William asks.

"By remembering I have to die," I say, and close the flap over my head.

We learn that shortly thereafter Lucinella has died *in situ*. Along with the fact that, like Alice, she eats mushrooms when it's time to shrink, it should be noted that her answer to William's query, in which he asks not just her opinion of his poetry but of his existence, is the first unqualifiedly positive response in the book, and this in the teeth of the fact that Lucinella too was a candidate for the prize. Yet it seems to have caused her death. What is going on?

Forget poetry for a moment. In relation to the malevolent aspects of her world, Lucinella is dealing with a society which deals in fear—and the terror it trafficks in is one of ultimate form, the fear of nonexistence. It is this that the book is really about, not poetry. Lucinella's penchant for questioning, which we tend to pass off as the wit of the uneasy, opens things up. When she finally undergoes Total Orgasm, a destructive confluence between personal and social so unimaginable it is both the promise and the threat of her society, she is already preparing to leave. Although she has been condescending toward William's poetry in the past, her unqualified affirmation seals her fate, for in this world the growth of one person means a diminution of another, since people grow only in the eyes of another. For this reason Lucinella becomes infinitely small. This is not really either a feminist or antifeminist reaction to the idea of male superiority but a brave, rather contemptuous, embrace of the threat of hidden demands. Since she lived through its threat, the society she lives in can no longer dictate the terms of reality of Lucinella's poetry. One might say that she has shed secrecy and gained privacy.

There was hope for Lucinella because, no matter how deep she was in the conventions of narcissism, she could always recognize herself as type, nay, as genre. Deeply sympathetic to her milieu, recognizing herself to be in and of it, appreciative of its capabilities, the sincerity of her respect for truth is what gives her final withdrawal its surprising authority. The myth she makes out of living circumstances is more effective literature than parody or satire, which yield to the distance of alienation.

Unreproachful but urgent, *Lucinella* is a sign to us that a certain cloistering of our literary life has led to dangerously high levels of toxicity. As a novelist who has lost the world of her birth, Segal probably can't teach us how to bear the loss of an entire world, but maybe we can learn how as poets and readers, artists and lookers, however we participate in the life of art, not to be quite so dependent on the society we happen to find ourselves in. □

THEATRE

HAROLD CLURMAN

Broadway theatre is a part of America, yet it appears shut off from America. When *A Texas Trilogy* was produced here early in the season, the audience looked on the scene of the play as if it were as foreign as Zanzibar. I had the same feeling at the first night of *The Trip Back Down* which takes place in Mansfield, Ohio (Longacre Theatre). Not only did many seem puzzled as to the location of Mansfield but of Ohio as well.

The Trip Back Down is by John Bishop, a young new American playwright. It is about Bobby Horvath who might be a mechanic or a garage attendant in Mansfield's 50,000 population but he has a special skill for modifying and racing stock cars and he wants to rise above the level of the rest of the fellows who work in the factories and shops of this industrial town. Amid the general drabness he wants to be a *somebody*, a man with his name in the papers, a star. He is so obsessed by this ambition that he is an unsatisfactory son, brother, husband, father. For awhile he seems headed toward the achievement of his ideal; then he begins to lose races. He returns to Mansfield, but he cannot adapt himself to the humdrum anonymity of the ordinary guys there. He then decides to return to his place among the also-ran racers who don't win but who don't quit.

What is interesting in the play is its atmosphere, its local speech, its sense of place and character, the people who rarely occupy important roles in recent American drama as seen on Broadway. We have somehow lost sight of them since the late 1920s and early 1930s when they showed up more often in novels than on stage. But such people constitute the largest body of American citizens.

LIMESTONE AND IRON

An iron ball, rust etched,
made by man from the earth
for his use, product of mind,
circular like the sun,
wedding world and imagination,
lies on my desk
with a limestone fossil,
its smooth ancient veins
arrested and held:
my fathers wrote words like this,
left traces in the earth
of iron, of stone, of wood,
and what is the perfect life
but to make beauty
from the heart of things,
the marriage of beauty and use,
so that they sing to one another
in mutual exchange?

Peter Hoheisel

The play suffers from diffuseness, the lack of a readily recognizable point and progressive tension. But its rather novelistic looseness permits the introduction of a diverse group of types—neglected wives, union toughs, bewildered veterans of old wars, whores, good-natured slobs —guzzlers all. They are a crude and sorry lot, yet unwittingly lost and touching: they are part of the loam on which our civilization is built. John Bishop knows these people intimately; he does not write as a tourist among them but as a companion. Therefore "attention must be paid."

The large, well-chosen cast is ruggedly directed by Terry Schreiber. John Cullum is an admirably endowed actor —rich voice, good speech—with something both modest and heroic in his bearing and yet emotionally inarticulate as Bobby Horvath. Anthony Call as his buddy has the grimy tang and blistering jocularity characteristic of the environment; Edward Seamon as Bobby's father strikes a deeper note in a mixture of unresolved sorrow and staunchness; Arlen Dean Snyder as Bobby's brother exemplifies the community's not-so-bad mean average, and Andrew Jarkowsky suggests the menacing power of a small-time union leader.

To call a Greenwich Village "barroom" show *Nightclub Cantata* may sound a bit uppity but as a matter of fact the name conveys the exact nature of its content (The Top of the Gate: 160 Bleecker St.). There are numbers like the spoof on an acrobatic stunt act which fits a nightclub performance. For the rest, with a few exceptions, the show has a seriousness which justifies the designa-

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tion of "cantata." On this occasion, the Top of the Gate has been turned into an existentialist café.

The show's overall tone, "Conceived, composed and directed" by Elizabeth Swados is gritty, brave, somber and exhilarating withal. It reflects the best part of a youth which has for some time now lived in a discouraging world, a youth of few illusions, a youth emotionally and physically tattered, but yet eager to continue its life without renouncing joy, despite an experience and foreknowledge of anxiety, deception and pain. One has only to scan the list of the writers whose poems or prose Elizabeth Swados has set to her music: there is Nazim Hikmet, a Turkish poet who died in prison; contributions by Pablo Neruda, Sylvia Plath, Frank O'Hara, David Avidan, an Israeli who writes in Hebrew; by Delmore Schwartz, Muriel Rukeyser, Isabella Leitner and Ms. Swados herself.

The collective import of the words spoken or sung, and for the most part, distinctly heard, is that one must endure life and even "dance" in it, though it be heavy and rough as a "fat rock." The Leitner piece called *Isabella*—the author's first name—strikes the keynote of the evening: it tells of the garbled language, distortions of German, invented in the shadow of the Nazi crematoriums. The sounds uttered are ugly, and what they bespeak are of cruelties and atrocities the very thought of which make one flinch and shudder. Yet even in the camp, songs emerged and this particular chant concludes with, "You don't die of anything but death. Suffering is nothing; it doesn't kill you—only death."

Hardly any of the songs with their overtones of muted tenderness articulate all their apprehension, all the half-understood but nonetheless indelibly memorable hurts which the youths have sustained. Yet we know them to be real because we share in all of them. Hence the underlay of brooding sentiment throughout the evening; happily, however, we are made to rejoice in the resilient fiber, the bounce of recovery, the hardihood, spiky humor and the basic generosity of spirit which keep these youngsters "dancing."

The Swados music—she herself plays the guitar and utters birdlike sounds as a lullaby with a fascinatingly hushed intensity—is for the most part bony rhythm, stark, strong, insistent, with here and there—in an adolescent love poem sung by Shelley Plimpton—a faintly plaintive touch which nevertheless reaches toward hope. There is little sensuousness in the music: there is only the energy of assertion and straight-in-the-eye determination.

I liked all the participants, and especially JoAnna Peled and Karen Evans who represent the "cantata's" most attractive attributes. The entire cast gives the impression of being people's people!

There is among our reviewers, I believe, more than in the public, a Tom Stoppard cult. I am aware of his amiable gifts, but I am not one of its devotees. Stoppard is a highly skilled, sophisticated entertainer with a fine way with words. As a "thinker," he is a clever popularizer, a deft epigone.

His latest piece of writing, *Dirty Linen* and *New-Found-Land*, is a "sandwich" of two one-act skits played together without intermission as if they were one (John Golden Theatre). One of the things I must praise this exhibit for is its lack of intellectual pretension. The dirty linen strung before us to begin with has to do with the sexual shenanigans of various members of Parliament (whose counterparts we have become familiar with in our Congress) about which Stoppard facetiously asserts that such normal frolic on the part of the legislators is nobody's business but their own, and really doesn't matter to anyone except to newspaper hacks hungry for copy. There are some rather obvious gags in the piece and a few spry jokes.

The new-found-land segment of the evening is an almost interminable monologue which pokes fun at the romantic travel ads extolling the wonders of these our States all rolled into one Niagara flow of purple patch clichés. It is a tour de force of splendid verbiage which requires the actor to speak all of it in breathless rapidity. The surprising thing about it is not that it is done well but

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that it is done at all. It too is spottily hilarious, something for hoi polloi to marvel at, though I suspect they won't to the degree expected.

The show as a whole amused and bored me. It is moderately well performed by a cast that is strenuously British, of which I most appreciated Merwin Goldsmith as a little-educated Lancashire M.P., and the Londoner Jacob Brooke (in *New-Found-Land*) as an old codger whose father knew Lloyd George. Cecilia Hart as the sexy secretary, more practiced with the Pill than in Gregg or Pitman stenography, has bright eyes and a welcome figure. □

INDIGENOUS MUSIC/Nat Hentoff

Unless the occasion is certifiedly historic—the final appearance of a nonpareil group or a specially commissioned and unusually imaginative program—I seldom go to jazz concerts anymore. This is not music to be listened to sitting still and in neat rows, let alone without "a taste," as musicians used to call booze. Most jazz is decidedly social music. At its diverse regional beginnings, the music was entirely functional, created and crafted for festivals, funerals, parades, picnics, the opening of a new business enterprise. And in the initial jazz clubs, sixty and more years ago, the patrons danced as they listened. Just to sit and stare at the musicians would have seemed farcical.

Gradually, as jazz became talked about in terms of "art," the dancing stopped in the clubs, much to the regret of most of the older players. Years back, I heard a wandering jazz patriarch explain to a young modernist, "They used to help us, being out there dancing. You'd look at them, you'd see how they moved, and you'd know if you were really getting through. And they'd give something to us. Watching them dance would give *us* more energy. I feel funny playing into empty space."

Nonetheless, the jazz clubs, even without dancing, were and are much more supportive of the jazz spirit than are concert halls. In addition to the more easeful ambiance, jazz performers are under much less pressure in a club. It is, after all, improvisatory music, and in a club, a player has several sets through which he can pace himself. "If something doesn't hang together in the first set," a trumpeter says, "I'll try it again later. But in a concert, with all those people just sitting there looking at me, I tend to play it safe. Many nights, after a concert, I feel so frustrated, I prowl around trying to find a club where I can sit in."

These years, with the resurgence of interest in jazz, more clubs are opening up, and some of them, if they survive economically, may be added to the select list of rooms so conducive to jazz that they became part of its history. One such candidate is Hopper's on Sixth Avenue in New York's Greenwich Village. The main establishment is a large, busy restaurant, but hidden away from the roistering is a rather small, narrow room, with an exceptionally high ceiling and red brick walls. The acoustics allow for spacious, crystalline sound except that the brick walls make the room so "live" that judicious drummers ought to use brushes rather than sticks in Hopper's. Very few drummers, however, have majored in judiciousness.

Hopper's tends to book lyrical, subtle improvisers. It is the New York base for Gerry Mulligan, and other performers have included guitarist Jim Hall and the specially assembled, softly brilliant two-piano team of John Lewis and Hank Jones. On a recent evening, I heard Bill Evans, a pianist of some controversy in jazz. There are musicians, such as the volcanic Cecil Taylor, who dismiss Evans as lacking energy or, others might say, "soul." Evans does indeed tend to introspection. But, while he does not play with the kind of force that would dislodge the bricks on the wall, Evans does project a quite extraordinary intensity. His head habitually bowed, his chin nearly touching his chest, Evans, with enormous concentration, creates continually fresh melodic variations that are fascinating to follow—all the more so because of his exceptionally precise command of dynamics and a harmonic imagination which effectively rebuts the contention of some avant-garde jazz players that all chords have been used up.

Evans's time is flowing, and considerably more complex than it appears to be. He does more than just swing; so integrally does he work harmony and melody into his rhythm designs that he is one of the relatively few jazz pianists who can wholly sustain interest all night long, playing unaccompanied. However, Evans prefers a trio context. Drummer Eliot Zigmund is competent but should use his brushes more, whether or not he's in Hopper's. Bassist Eddie Gomez has been with Evans for more than a decade, and in that time, has evolved into a virtuoso of justified international renown. His solos are not flashy, though he has the technique to dazzle. Like Evans, Gomez prefers to work inside a song, mining unexpected essences and constructing therefrom quite new sound-shapes which organically extend, without distorting, the original song.

At Hopper's, the musicians were close enough to all of us, so that, even though we weren't dancing, I think we gave them back some of the intensity we received from them. May jazz clubs endure. □

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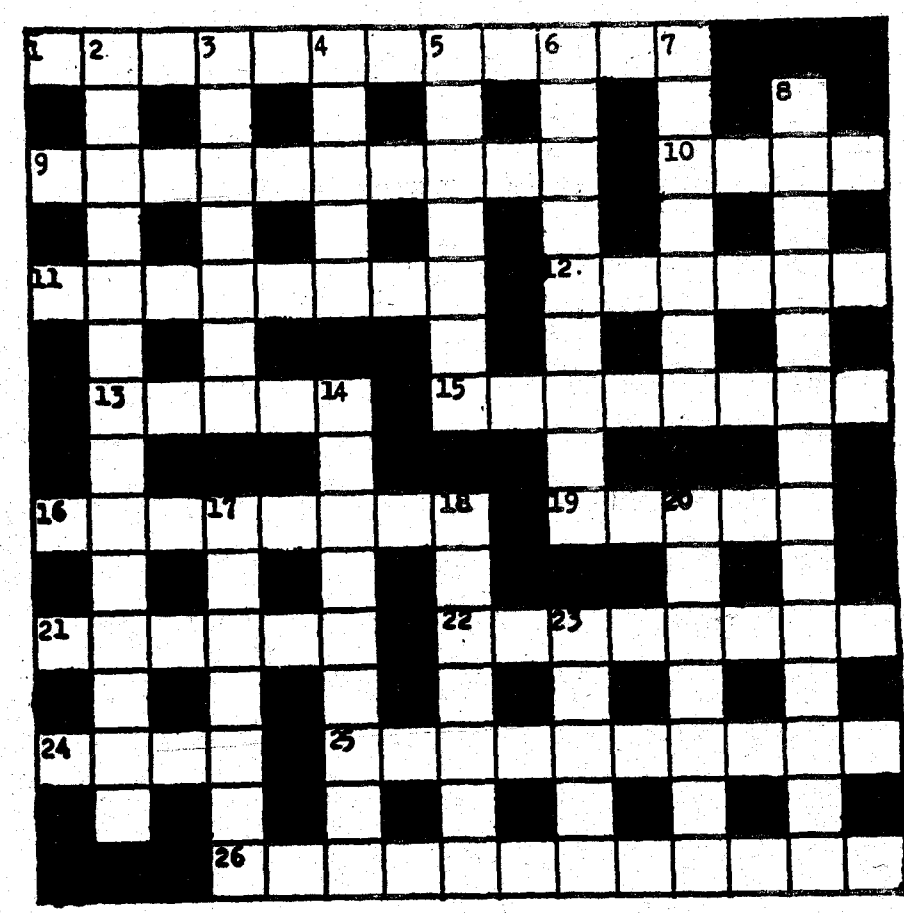

ACROSS

1 Not much room on emergency landing, which must be close. (6,6)
9 Reputedly honest, but a little short. (Not really!) (3,7)
10 A made-to-measure fairy-tale girl. (4)
11 People fit because of them? (8)
12 Stay loose, if one does, being old-fashioned. (6)
13 In place of a witch, the last thing, alternatively. (5)
15 If one does, one must have been on and off. (8)
16 Not likely to be caught napping in such a state as Oman is in. (8)
19 Very wise men get to a hundred, but it's probably only an illusion. (5)
21 Such animals need to rest badly. (6)
22 Fourth adjective, at times. (8)
24 Sort of 18, and a gal gets lost in the city. (4)
25 2 had a theory about it. (10)
26 A Gallic father's effort at cooking, of course. (6,6)

DOWN

2 Possibly consort with one German poetess and one great man. (6,8)
3 Everything goes to one bankrupt, in a sense, having made an improvement. (7)
4 Show a little pain in the elbow, in certain parts. (5)
5 Would one be considered a little 18, if production is involved? (7)
6 To an unpleasant degree, the U.N. made us a bad deal. (2,7)
7 It presents the narrow view, with one's orbs on fire. (3-4)
8 It usually involves a power-play. (8,6)
14 Isn't cracked, evidently, but a statement from such as 9 does. (5,4)
17 A person's spirit, in a small way, shows just what one is. (7)
18 Part of the gang Eli chose to be very good. (7)
20 Pines for part of the old armor, by the sound of it. (7)
23 One used to wind the cord this way, to spin the winning position. (2,3)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1663

ACROSS: 1 and 4 Double negative; 10 and 11 Solomon Islands 12 Rides: 13, 28 across and 19 down One and all; 14 and 16 down Dunce cap: 15 Sonic; 17 Applause: 21 Flippers: 23 Llama: 26 India: 29 Senna: 30 Nailing: 31 Tympani; 32 and 33 Listen to reason. DOWN: 1 and 25 Distress signal; 2 Unladen: 3 Lumps: 5 Elide: 6 Ailed: 7 Innings: 8 and 20 Easter vacation: 9 Annotate: 18 Postdate: 22 Laddies: 24 Annuals: 27 Arise: 28 Argot; 29 Somme.

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